

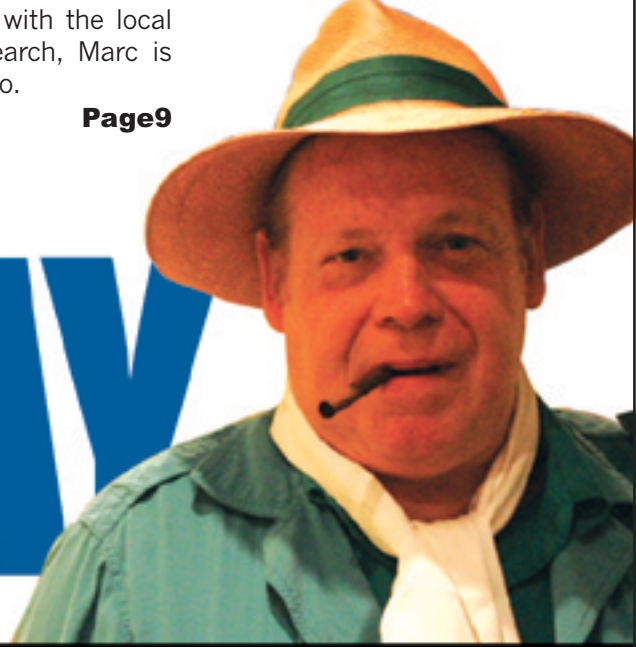
"In our agency, there are about 1,000 vacancies for peasant workers, but less than 20 come every day seeking work."
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Drum towers are the village center, where meetings are held and mediation on disputes takes place.
Page 16



Thanks to his close contact with the local people and painstaking research, Marc is now an authority on the Congo.
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BEIJING TODAY

FRIDAY JULY 23 2004

NO. 164

CN11-0120

HTTP://BJTODAY.YNET.COM

China Refutes UK Official's Remarks on HK

Yang Wenchang, commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China in Hong Kong expressed Wednesday strong dissatisfaction with remarks on Hong Kong made by Stephen Bradley, British Consul-General to Hong Kong.

He refuted Bradley's remarks concerning Hong Kong's implementation of "One Country, Two Systems."

Bradley Tuesday cited a report presented to the British parliament by the Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs Office as saying that "since the handover of Hong Kong to China, our regular reports to parliament have concluded that generally One Country Two Systems have worked well in practice."

However, he stressed "we feel that we could not come to exactly the same conclusion as we had previously because of recent events."

Yang said Bradley's accusation was totally groundless and had ulterior motives.

Hong Kong residents enjoy freedom of speech, freedom of the press and freedom of association, and their basic freedoms and rights have been fully guaranteed, he said.

He said that Hong Kong's democratic process has been advancing according to the Basic Law and Hong Kong residents are enjoying more and more democratic rights. This is an obvious fact, which was admitted in the past 14 British reports submitted to the parliament.

Yang stressed that the interpretation of the Basic Law and decisions of the Chinese National People's Congress Standing Committee are necessary measures taken in accordance with the national constitution and the Basic Law for guaranteeing the smooth advancing of Hong Kong's constitutional development.

The "interpretation" and "decisions" accord with the Constitution and the Basic Law and thus are fair and reasonable.

Yang pointed out that today's Hong Kong is not what it was before it returned to the motherland. Bradley, as a foreign consul-general to Hong Kong, does not have any right to comment on Hong Kong's political affairs.

He expected Bradley to be prudent in his speech and actions, in accordance with the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations, and refrain from making remarks that are not in keeping with his position.

Yang expected Bradley to play a positive role in the sound development of Sino-British relations.

Yang said that "One Country, Two Systems" is a wise, pioneering concept initiated by the late Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping for solving the Hong Kong issue, according to the practical conditions in Hong Kong.

He said the decisiveness for implementing the great cause of "One Country, Two Systems" by the central government and Hong Kong Special Administrative Region government is unassailable, adding that the two governments, as well as Hong Kong compatriots, will never tolerate any foreign intervention in Hong Kong's affairs.

(Xinhua)

Extreme Biking



Four of the five cyclists taking part in an expedition retracing the Silk Road route taken by Marco Polo returned unexpectedly to Beijing last Saturday, after completing just one-fifth of the 14,000-kilometer trip from Beijing to Venice.

Two days later, Beijing newspapers reported that the four pulled out of the expedition over a dispute with the organizer, Beijing based Oriental Bozhong Advertising. The four maintain that the company had betrayed the essence of the biking trip, namely the Olympic spirit of participation, cooperation, encouragement and challenge, by requiring the cyclists to travel by car in order to keep up with the schedule.

On Monday, the expedition website, run by Oriental Bozhong, published a statement saying that the journey would be completed despite the departure of the four, and that it would still be an exhibition of the Olympic spirit.

Yesterday morning the team left Kashgar, Xinjiang, with Zhu Guofan, the reaming cyclist, joined by two of the accompanying TV crew and the team leader and deputy leader on bicycles.

The original team consisted of 14 members: five cyclists and a support group of nine traveling in three vehicles, including three reporters from Travel Satellite TV.

"The idea to bike from Beijing to Venice came to me last October when nine Italian cyclists gave the Beijing Olympic Organizing Committee a bike re-assembled from components of those they rode in a trip from Venice to Beijing in 2001. They said at the time they hoped they would someday meet some brave Chinese cyclists in Venice," Gao Hong, a keen amateur cyclist, told *Beijing Today* Monday.

Short of cash to fund such an expedition, Gao began to look for a sponsor, and was introduced to Oriental Bozhong Advertising through Zuo Baohua, producer of Travel Information, a program on Travel Satellite TV.

As the project began to take shape, four more cyclists became involved. Zhao Yueqing paid around 15,000 yuan to participate in the activity, and Xu Liangchun, the only female cyclist in the team, paid 50,000 yuan. There was also Zhu Kangnian from the China Health Care Association (CHCA), and Zhu Guofan, president of Liangzi Foot Bath Health and Fitness, who paid US \$10,000 for his own expenses and 200,000 yuan sponsorship.

In the support group, along with Zuo Baohua and a three-man camera crew from Travel Information, were team leader Zheng Yi, deputy team leader Zuo Qinghua from Oriental Bozhong and driver Tong Wanxin.

Although Zuo Qinghua admits the departure of the four is certain to incur some economic loss and damage to the reputation of those involved, especially after the "irresponsible Beijing media reports," he believes that the four cyclists will lose more.

"What they have done is not only an insult to the whole team but also shows their irresponsibility," Zheng added.

"We did not break the agreement. It is they who broke the agreement first," Gao Hong countered.

Tong Wanxin told *Beijing Today* that starting from the third day, Zhu Kangnian asked for a rope to be tied to the back of one of the cars, "Whenever he

'For a cyclist, the trip is an opportunity to fulfill our dreams, but for those in the cars, they just want to visit the famous sights.'



Xu Liangchun, Zhu Kangnian, Gao Hong and Zhao Yueqing pause for a rest while passing Huoyanshan (Flame Mountain), Xinjiang, on July 8.

felt too tired to ride any further or when there was an uphill slope, he would wave to me to be towed," Tong said, "It happened at least 10 times a day."

Zhu Kangnian disputes this. "I did ride more than 200 kilometers on one day, from Xingxingxia to Hami, in Xinjiang. I did have to accept a ride on several occasions, but it was never by my own choice."

The four cyclists say conflict first arose when Zhu Guofan, the other cyclist, told them each separately in Tianzhu, Gansu, that the others had agreed to be driven over Mount Wushaoling on the way to Wuwei, when in fact they had not.

When Gao Hong and the others realized the next day that Zhu Guofan had deceived them, they decided to ride over the 3,000-meter Mount Wushaoling, just as the Italian cyclists did in 2001. "But Zheng and Zuo Qinghua threatened to leave us behind," Zhu Kangnian said. "They threw our luggage out of the cars and drove away. But we rode over the mountain by ourselves."

Zheng maintained, "They did not ride over Mount Wushaoling as they told the media. In fact they rode along the expressway, bypassing Wushaoling altogether, which can be seen by the photo they sent to media."

The four recall that when they arrived at Wuwei, Zhu Guofan was so angry he swore at them and threatened to get someone to beat them.

The remaining team members interviewed by *Beijing Today* all agree that Zhu Kangnian was the primary troublemaker. "More than 90 percent of the conflicts and unhappiness during the trip are attributable to Zhu Kangnian," Zuo Qinghua said. "I tried to solve all the problems and fulfill my promise that I should be responsible for the safety of every member of the team and maintain the team as a united one."

Zhu Kangnian says the conflict between the two groups exploded when they reached Korla in Xinjiang in the early afternoon of July 13. He says when his suggestion to spend the night at Korla was rejected on the previous day in Yanzhi, he realized that there might be a repetition of the violence in

Wuwei. "If we did not sleep at Korla, we would have to sleep in the desert before we arrived at the next city, around 180 kilometers from Korla. We had no water to wash for several days and Xu was having her period," he said.

Gao says that night, Zheng warned him that the two teams should never be separated, if they did "their lives would be endangered." Zhu Kangnian said, "After hearing that, I decided to seek protection from the local police."

The four left the hotel where the team stayed and moved to another one with the protection of local police.

According to the statement sent to Beijing Today, when the team arrived at the turnoff for Korla after riding 60 kilometers from Yanzhi, Zhu Kangnian insisted that all the team should stay in Korla, saying he had something important to talk about with the team leaders. Zheng and Zuo Qinghua had no choice but to agree, though they were scheduled to travel 170 kilometers that day. After talking separately with the four, they waited for them for dinner at the hotel, but they never showed up

"The conflict is a conflict between different understandings towards the world, which is inevitable," Gao pointed out. "For a cyclist, the trip is an opportunity to fulfill our dreams. We can enjoy the most beautiful scenery along the road. But for those in the cars, they just want to visit the famous sights."

He says he regrets having sought commercial sponsorship. "Till now I still believe that Zuo Baohua is a good man with great interest in the activity. But sponsors are certain to want some commercial return. So they make more efforts in line with their own and their business partners' interests and become inevitably less interested in the cycling trip itself," Gao said.

An article published by Xinhua early this month says sponsorship is a strategy to bring benefit to both the sponsor and the sport or the activity itself. However the purity of the sport or the activity can hardly fail to be challenged by seeking commercial return and benefit from the people involved, including both the sponsor and the beneficiary.

Zuo Baohua highlights that the departure of the four cyclists is nothing out of the ordinary during such a trip. "I did not wish to see any member leave, but their departure is, in the end, the best solution."

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Free Personal Classifieds

Beijing Today is launching a free personal classifieds service. For sale and wanted ads, situations wanted and vacant, language exchange and personals, and rentals will be

printed free of charge. Email your personal classifieds (in English and Chinese) to info@ynet.com. Personal classifieds should conform to relevant laws and regulations.

BAT Licence Reports Denied

By Wei Lixin

The China State Tobacco Monopoly Administration (CSTMA) issued an official denial that approval has been given to British American Tobacco's plan for a manufacturing joint venture in China Wednesday.

"CSTMA has not granted any foreign tobacco company permission to set up a manufacturing joint venture in China recently," a press release from CSTMA stated.

According to recent media reports, British American Tobacco had been granted a licence to set up a manufacturing joint venture with China Eastern Investment, with a manufacturing capacity of 100 billion cigarettes.

The State Tobacco Monopoly Administration under the State Council is responsible for the nationwide tobacco monopoly. The establishment of an enterprise producing tobacco products is subject to the approval of the CSTMA and registration by the administrative department for industry and commerce.

British American Tobacco, the world's second-largest cigarette manufacturer, said last Friday that the Chinese government had approved a plan for a manufacturing joint venture, thus granting BAT the right to expand into China – the largest tobacco market in the world, with annual sales of around 1.78 trillion cigarettes, a third of total

global consumption..

Domestic and international media have repeated the story since the initial announcement, and BAT shares jumped 2.3 percent, according to a Reuters report last Friday.

Had the news been correct, BAT would have been the first foreign company to win approval by the Chinese government to build a factory in China, providing a big boost for BAT while disappointing other western companies who are eagerly seeking to establish themselves in the world's fastest growing economy.

Early Monday, Ann Tradigo of the BAT press office in London confirmed the reports to *Beijing Today* saying

"It is absolutely correct."

Founded in 1902 by rival tobacco companies American Tobacco and Imperial Tobacco, BAT built a large market in China during the first half of the 20th century, but lost its holdings here after 1949.

China, with more than 350 million smokers, has begun to ease restrictions on foreign companies setting up business in China following its accession to the World Trade Organization in 2001. It was decided last year that special retail licensees for overseas cigarettes be abolished from January 1 this year, which is considered a small but welcome step in a market that has long baffled foreign tobacco companies.

Network Audits to be Launched in Central Units

By Sun Yongjian

The State Audit Office will launch networked audits in the central budget units of departments such as fiscal, customs, tax and finance by 2007, Xinhua News Agency reported Thursday.

The new system is expected greatly improve auditing efficiency, according to the report.

"More than 60 percent of the audit items launched by the Audit Office will be completed online by 2007,"

Liu Jiayi, vice president of the State Audit Office told Xinhua.

"The networked audit will prove to be a highly efficiency system," Liu said, "For instance, 23,000 staff were needed to complete a nationwide audit of the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China and Construction Bank in 1999. In 2003, using a network system, only 1.1 percent of that number were required for the same task, but the number of violations of regulations found increased 38-fold."

Diplomatic Archives Opened to Public

By Wei Lixin

Over 5,000 previously classified documents have been made available to the public for the first time as of Monday by the Foreign Ministry.

The archives are mainly related to diplomatic issues between 1949 and 1955, specifically Sino-Asian and Sino-American relationships.

There are also documents on Geneva and Asia-Africa conferences, and files on the Bandung conference, including materials related to a purported assassination attempt against Premier Zhou Enlai, known as the "Kashmir Princess" incident.

According to Hao Weihua, deputy

director of the archives, another batch of diplomatic files from 1956 to 1960 will be declassified in late 2005 or early 2006.

Foreign organizations or individuals seeking to access the archives should submit a written application through official institutions or their country's diplomatic missions in China.

In January this year, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs declassified some 4,000 diplomatic files. According to regulations governing such matters, historical files that no longer need to be kept confidential should be made available to the public 30 years from the date of their creation.

Capital's Industrial Sector Sees Sharp Growth

By Chu Meng

Beijing's industrial sector expanded by more than one fifth in the first half of this year, a record increase for the city's industrial economic growth, a spokesman from the Beijing Municipal Bureau of Industrial Development announced Tuesday.

According to announcement, total industrial trading achieved an increase of 57.61 billion yuan, 22.5 percent higher than the same period last year and 4.8 per cent higher than the increase for the same period in the previous ten years.

Local enterprises, especially some larger ones, have made a big contribution to the city's industry development. May was the first month state-owned

enterprises (SOEs) in Beijing achieved a growth rate of 10 percent or more since 1990, reflecting the strong economic growth in China's state-owned industrial sector.

Meanwhile, 29 merger and bankruptcy reform programs, involving property worth 630 million yuan (US \$5.90 million) and 780 million yuan (\$93.98 million) of debt, have been completed, which has helped restructure poorly performing SOEs.

Five large companies – Beijing Nokia Mobile Telecommunications, Ericsson (China), Nokia Hangxing, Yanshan Petroleum and Chemical Corporation and North China Electric Power Group, account for more than a fifth of the output in the sector.

of this year. From January to June, 21,000 new foreign-invested enterprises were authorized by the Chinese government. They had a contractual investment of US \$72.7 billion and an actual investment of \$33.88 billion. This is 43 percent and 12 percent higher respectively than the same period for 2003, said Liao.

By the end June, China boasted more than 480,000 foreign-funded enterprises with foreign capital of \$535.3 billion.

The manufacturing industries, technology industries, capital centralized industries and research and development centers all have witnessed a great increase in foreign investment.



Xinhua Photo

China Names Athens Olympic Squad

China will send a record 407 athletes to compete in 26 sports at the Athens Olympics Games, aiming to finish top three in the medal standings, said vice chief-de-mission Li Furong in Beijing Tuesday.

The squad will be headed by Yuan Weimin, minister of the State Administration of Sports, and also includes 226 officials, interpreters and medical staff.

China finished third in the medal standings four years ago in Sydney with 28 gold, 16 silver and 15 bronze, behind the United States and Russia.

Li stressed that winning good results is just one of the two goals for the Chinese squad, the other

is to give Olympic experience to the young athletes who are medal hopefuls in the 2008 Olympics Games in Beijing.

The oldest athlete is 43-year-old sharpshooter Wang Yifu, who will compete in his sixth Olympic Games and is expect to win his second gold medal. The youngest is female swimmer Zhang Tianyi, who is only 14.

As in the past, China will rely more on women athletes than men in Athens. Women account for 269 of the 407 athletes, and men for only 138.

Li also said that Chinese athletes will face harder challenges in Athens than four years ago.

(Xinhua)

Student-Aid Loans Upgraded

By Wei Lixin

The National Student-Aid Loan Regulation put into force in 2000 will undergo a major overhaul from this autumn, with adjustments being applied to the main policies allowing students to benefit more from student-aid loans.

"Opinions on the Improvement on Management of Student-aiding Loans" has been enacted by the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Finance, People's Bank of China and China Banking Regulatory Commission, and will be put into practice this September. It is expected to be a real boon for students while reducing the risks to banks.

Under the previous regulation, 50 percent of the interest accrued during the loan term was discounted by way of a refund by the state. In the new regulation, the discount has been

increased to 100 percent. Furthermore, the repayment term is extended from four years to six years after the borrower's graduation.

If the borrower continues studies after graduation, the discount on interest will last for as long as the borrower is studying. If the graduate volunteers to work for a certain period in areas or industries designated as a hardship, the loan can be repaid in the form of a scholarship by state.

The new regulation also expand the scope of eligible applicants. In the past, only undergraduates and junior college students in full-time ordinary institutions for higher education were qualified for such loans. From September, graduates and students pursuing a second bachelor's degree as well as students of higher vocational education in full-time ordinary institutions can also apply for the loan.

Public Security Review

Criminal reports received by Beijing police's 110 emergency hotline this week were similar in number to last week, with street robberies seeing a relative decrease. A total of 247 criminal suspects have been apprehended after investigations.

Break-ins mostly occurred at Shuangjing, Liulitun, Dongba and Taiyanggong in Chaoyang, Chaoyangmen, Jingshan and Ditan in Dongcheng, Yuegezhuang, Majiabao and Liuliqiao in Fengtai, as well as Beitapingzhuang, Huayuanlu, Yangfangdian and Qinglongqiao in Haidian late at night and during the day, while street robberies occurred most frequently at Maizidian and Panjiayuan in Chaoyang, Tiancun in Haidian and Liuliqiao in Fengtai during the day.

Shuangjing, Taiyanggong and Yangzha in Chaoyang, Zhongguancun in Haidian, as well as Liuliqiao and Panjiayuan in Fengtai were the most common places for auto-related crimes to take place, mainly at night and in the early morning.

(Information from Beijing Public Security Bureau)

Control Loosened on Foreign Bank Cards

By Qiao Ying

In a bid to enhance supervision of business, the State Administration of Foreign Exchange (SAFE) issued new foreign exchange bank card regulations last Thursday.

Market changes mean that the new rule, which will take effect on September 1, will see some adjustments being made to previous policies on foreign exchange denominated cards.

More curbs are being placed on overseas transactions using domestically issued cards, while regulators are also loosening controls on the use of overseas bank cards on the mainland.

According to the new regulation, those holding cards issued by overseas institutions will now be able to draw cash in foreign currencies from designated banks.

However the major principles on the supervision on foreign currency cards, as established in existing regulations, will not be altered. According to these principles, foreign currencies are still prohibited to be used for circulation in China and only current account transactions can enjoy full convertibility.

Regulators also decided to set a cap of US \$10,000 on the maximum amount of cash that can be drawn from domestically issued foreign exchange cards in six consecutive months, in a bid to more closely monitor the use of domestic bank cards overseas.

100 Foreign Banks Offering RMB Exchange

By Chu Meng

The number of foreign banks in China granted RMB business rights had reached 100 by July 15, more than half of which are headquartered in Shanghai, the China Banking Regulatory Commission revealed Monday.

Of these, 53 are located in Shanghai, 19 in Shenzhen and 8 in Tianjin. Nearly half of them have been granted rights in RMB holding and exchange, as well as credit towards Chinese capital enterprises.

According to the announcement, by the end of June 2004, the total volume of RMB reserve from foreign capital banks in China had reached 84.4 billion yuan, a 49 percent increase compared with the same period last year. Credit and loan business accounted for 48.8 billion yuan, an 18 percent increase on the previous year; and total RMB savings also reached 48.8 billion yuan, double the amount of 2003. Moreover, they have made profits totaling 267 million yuan during the first half this year.

The China Banking Regulatory Commission has approved foreign capital banks to open RMB business in 13 cities in China. According to the WTO agreement, the number will continue to rise in 2004.

Grain and Food Security Research Center Established

By Qiao Ying

The Research Center of Chinese Grain and Food Security was established Saturday at China Agricultural University, according to a Xinhua report.

The center will focus on policy and technical issues related to grain and food security, offer the government suggestions on agricultural problems, and supply techniques to improve production capacity.

The center has a number of specific aims to achieve. It will invite experts from home and abroad to give lectures at regular forums, publish an annual report grain and food security in China, and establish a website to connect with the experts and researchers nationwide.

Twenty-two notable experts, including Nobel Prize laureates Doctor Norman Borlaug and Doctor Rober Huber and Chinese experts Yuan Longping, Zuo Tianjue have been invited to serve as consultants for the center.

China Firms Get Thumbs Up for Viagra

By Sun Yongjian

Four Chinese pharmaceutical firms have attained domestic licenses to produce Viagra, an erectile dysfunction-correcting drug developed by US-based Pfizer Pharmaceutical, since the government negated the company's patent for the product, the *Beijing Morning Post* reported on Monday.

Pfizer's patent protecting the method for using active ingredient sildenafil to make Viagra had been rescinded in China because technical materials filed in related patent applications were deemed insufficient in accordance with Chinese patent law, Wang Wei, president of the Beijing Huake Union Patent Office told *Beijing Today* on Tuesday. His office was entrusted by 12 domestic drug makers to press against the patent.

Removal of valid patent protection meant domestic firms could start using sildenafil to make their own Viagra-like drugs without paying any rights fees, Wang said.

The four companies newly licensed by the State Food and Drug Administration Bureau to make the drug are Techpool Biochemistry Pharmaceutical Company of Changzhou, Baiyunshan Pharmaceutical Co. of Guangzhou, Jilin-based Henghe Pharmaceutical Co. and Kangerwei Pharmaceutical Co. of Chongqing, he said.

The price of the medication, first put on the China market in 2000, will fall to 30 yuan to 50 yuan per tablet from the current 99 yuan once mass production begins at those firms' factories and could get as low as 20 yuan a dose. That is according to Zhang Yucai, chairman of the board of Hongtaomao Pharmaceutical Co., one of the 12 domestic enterprises that have been fighting the patent since 2001.

"The curative effects of domestically



Geda, a domestically-made imitator of Viagra, on sale in a counter in Nanjing, Jiangsu Province

Photo by Imaginechina

made Viagra will be beyond all question. Pills produced in China will surely be exported to overseas markets," Zhang said.

"The domestic production of Viagra will create a vast market in which several hundred billion yuan of profits and considerable tax revenue can be realized."

Production and sales of the pill would start one or two months after a Viagra production group was co-established by at

least 10 domestic pharmaceutical enterprises, Zhang revealed.

Pfizer, however, insists its patent should still be considered valid. Wang Xunbiao, media manager of Pfizer China told *Beijing Youth Daily* on July 19 that the patent on Viagra was still effective until the No. 1 Intermediate People's Court of Beijing issued an official ruling on the issue.

Pfizer CEO Hank McKinnell said in Singapore that the company was going to file a lawsuit and could decide to reduce its future investment in China, *Beijing Youth Daily* reported Tuesday.

Wang Wei told *Beijing Today* that according to Chinese law, if Pfizer refused to accept the present result, the company could still seek assistance through the judicial process.

HK Banks Backing Luxury House Buyers

By Sun Yongjian

Two Hong Kong banks have begun providing foreign currency loans for home buyers in Shanghai, the overseas edition of *People's Daily* reported on Monday.

Influenced by state policy of macro regulatory control, domestic banks' loan conditions have been raised in order to control loan scales and guard against economic overheating, but the market has been left open for foreign banks, the report said.

Hong Kong-based Wing Hang Bank and Bank of East Asia are providing housing loans to buyers of property in Shanghai's Yucuiyuan Garden, a residential

complex developed by Hutchison Whampoa.

Miss Xiao, an official from the China department of Wing Hang Bank, told *Beijing Today* on Wednesday that the bank's 20-year loans have done well in large mainland cities such as Shanghai, Guangzhou, Beijing and Shenzhen, with 200 new customers signing up every month.

Miss He, an official of the Chinese Estate Dept. of the Bank of East Asia told *Beijing Today* that the bank provided US dollar, HK dollar and RMB loans with terms of 25 to 30 years to Chinese mainland customers.

Both said the interest rates of

their banks' loans could be floated.

Homes in Yucuiyuan Garden sell for \$6,500 per square meter and more than 60 percent of buyers are foreign people, a property employee who would not give his name told *Beijing Today* on Wednesday. Housing loans are greatly needed due to the property's high prices, but it is very difficult to get loans from domestic banks because of their strict limitations, according to the source.

The interest rate for the Hong Kong banks' 30-year loans is only 2.75 percent, far below the 5.04 percent charged for equivalent loans by mainland banks, *People's Daily* said.

Pierre Cardin Sues Two Chinese Clothiers

By Sun Yongjian

Famed fashion house Pierre Cardin has filed a lawsuit against two domestic companies, demanding 9.53 million yuan to cover contract violations, the Nanjing, Jiangsu Province-based *Nanjing Daily* newspaper reported Sunday.

The French company filed its suit in early July with the People's Court of Nanjing against

Nanjing Zhengfang Group and Qiuzhiniao Industrial Company on grounds that both enterprises had used the Pierre Cardin trademark without paying fully for the rights, Yao Binbin, chief judge of the case, confirmed to *Beijing Today* Tuesday.

Hearings were likely to start in about two months, Yao said.

In its indictment, Pierre Car-

din insists Nanjing Zhengfang Group owes \$869,500 of the \$940,000 trademark charge settled in contracts signed between the two sides in 1998 and 1999.

"The indictment does not tell the truth, and our company is preparing a response," a source from inside Zhengfang Group who refused to reveal his name told *Beijing Today* on Wednesday.

Alstom Expands Presence in Power Market

By Chu Meng

French industrial conglomerate Alstom has signed a framework agreement with Beijing Beizhong Steam Turbine Generator to establish a joint venture to manufacture 600-megawatt class steam turbines and generators, *China Daily* reported Monday.

Qian Jing, communications director of Alstom China confirmed the news on Tuesday.

Alstom will hold a 60 percent stake and Beijing Beizhong a 40 percent share in the venture, aimed at quickly becoming a major supplier of high-tech steam turbines and generator technology in the domestic market.

"On the power industry front, Alstom plans to supply an entire range of steam turbine and generator products to the Chinese market, including those for nuclear plants. We also have plans to lift turnover in China to 1 bil-

lion euros within two years by tapping into the nation's booming power and transportation markets," Alstom Chairman and CEO Patrick Kron was quoted as saying at a July 14 press conference by *China Daily*.

While he declined to reveal the scale of investment in the joint venture, Kron said it would focus on manufacturing subcritical and super-critical steam turbine generator technologies for the efficient and environmentally-friendly production of electricity.

The Chinese government has launched a massive scheme to construct new power plants to keep up with surging electricity demand around the country.

"In the past, most key technologies for manufacturing heavy steam turbines and generators were controlled by transnational corporations, who therefore kept most of the revenues. Chi-

nese manufacturers have to master their own technologies and establish intellectual property rights," Gu Guobiao, an academician from the Chinese Academy of Engineering said at the press conference.

Kron said he expected China's power market to maintain double-digit growth over the next few years.

Alstom has long been active in supplying equipment and technology to China's power industry, especially the hydropower sector. The company supplied eight of the 14 700-megawatt generators installed in the left bank of the Three Gorges Project

"Alstom is also looking forward to tapping the potential in the nuclear power business, as the Chinese government plans to raise the country's nuclear power-generating capacity fourfold to 36,000 megawatts by 2020," Kron said.

DuPont Urges Calm over Teflon Cancer Scare

By Sun Yongjian

American chemical maker DuPont has been on a campaign the past two weeks to assure an alarmed Chinese public that its Teflon products, used in non-stick cookware, are safe and non-carcinogenic.

"China's Administration of Quality Supervision will absolutely not find any poisonous ingredient in the non-stick cookware made by DuPont, I am very confident about that," Charles Brown, president of DuPont China Holding Co. told *Beijing Today* during a Tuesday news conference.

Chinese quality control authorities have said they would conduct their own investigations into the safety of Teflon, with results to be issued in September, following an announcement by the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on July 8 that the company had failed for more than 20 years to report potential health risks caused by a key ingredient in the manufacture of the non-stick coating.

Since news of the EPA statement broke, Chinese media have widely reported that non-stick cookware that used Teflon could cause cancer, causing sales of such items to plummet and be pulled from store shelves around the country.

Ren Yafen, vice president of DuPont China argued at the media conference that there were misunderstandings in those reports, as the so-called cancer-causing synthetic compound perfluorooctano-



Charles Brown, president of DuPont China Holding Co.

Photo by Wang Zhenlong

ic acid (PFOA) was completely removed during the process of baking the coating at high temperatures.

"We haven't found anything harmful to human health in PFOA in our experience of 50 years of using it," Ren said.

Brown said the company had offered a research report on the safety of Teflon coatings conducted by a third party to China's Administration of Quality Supervision to help them make their judgment.

"We are very confident that the same conclusion will be drawn that the non-stick cookware made by DuPont is not harmful to human health," he concluded.

China Mobile Becomes Beijing Olympic Partner

China Mobile Communications Group has been selected as the mobile communications service provider for the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games after careful evaluation and review.

China Mobile will provide all mobile communication networks and services for the Beijing Olympic Games, 2008 Paralympic Games, the Beijing Organizing Committee for the 2008 Olympic Games (BOCOG), the Chinese Olympic Committee (COC) as well as the Chinese delegation to the 2006 Winter Olympic Games in Turin, Italy.

"With the increasing demands for organization and operation at the Olympic Games, mobile communication technology will be applied more extensively to back up a successful Olympics," said Wang Wei, vice-president and secretary-general of BOCOG at the signing ceremony in Beijing on Wednesday.

"China Mobile, as a partner, will provide advanced mobile communications and network services. This will be helpful in realizing a high-tech Olympics," added Wang.

No. 242 on the latest Fortune 500 list, China Mobile has the largest network and most subscribers in China. The enterprise currently has 177 million GoTone network customers who can enjoy international roaming services in 176 countries and regions worldwide. (Xinhua)

Bank of China Capital Adequacy Ratio Tops Eight Percent

By Sun Yongjian

A senior official from Bank of China (BOC) revealed on July 16 that the state-owned bank's capital adequacy ratio would reach 8.3 percent by Thursday when the issuing of 14.07 billion yuan of subordinate debts was finished, the *Beijing Morning Post* reported Monday.

The news was confirmed by a BOC press officer on Tuesday.

Zhu Min, assistant to the bank's president said at a July 16 press conference that funds from BOC's issuance of subordinated debt arrived in its account on July 22, bringing its capital adequacy ratio above the eight percent mark set by the Basel Agreement.

Future issues of 60 billion of subordinated debt could push BOC's capital adequacy ratio to around 11 percent, Zhu added.

He said that the bank's rate of non-performing loans had fallen to 5.46 percent, down 10 percent from early this year but still far higher than the two percent average of leading international banks.

The Bank of China earned 32.8 billion yuan in profit during the first half of this year, a 16.1 percent rise from the same period of last year. By the end of June, the bank's total assets reached over 4 trillion yuan, up 4.6 percent from the end of last year, according to a Xinhua news agency report on July 16.

Chinese Beer Giant Brews Deal with Carlsburg

By Sun Yongjian

Domestic beer maker Yellow River Brewery, which holds a dominant market share in northwestern China, said last Friday that it was teaming up with Denmark-based brewing giant Carlsburg to establish four production centers, *Shanghai Securities* reported last Friday.

The four new breweries will be joint ventures in which the two companies will each invest 150 million yuan for equal division of shares.

Lanzhou, Gansu Province-based Yellow River Brewery's annual production capacity will run over 300,000 tons of beer after the first phase of the co-operation plan is completed.

Koizumi's Government to Begin Japan Post Sale by 2007

July 18 (Bloomberg) - Japan Post, which holds a quarter of the nation's savings, will have to compete with banks, insurers and other deposit-takers starting 2007, said Heizo Takenaka, Minister for Economy and Fiscal Policy.

"We'll be privatizing Japan Post in 2007," Takenaka said on state-run NHK television.

Japan Post, which doesn't pay any tax, will have to compete like any other bank and insurers in the country for the benefit of the public, Takenaka said, without giving details.

The state-run service, which combines mail delivery with selling insurance and government-guaranteed savings, may have to break up, said Japan's guild of corporate executives. Japan Post "is too big" and

is almost a monopoly that hampers competition, said Kakutaro Kitashiro, the IBM Japan Ltd. chairman who is also head of the Japan Association of Corporate Executives. Unless its businesses are split up, "the private sector won't be able to compete," he said.

It must be sold because its inefficiencies are costing the public, said the 53-year old Takenaka, who has been leading the government's push to turn Japan Post into a company.

The task of selling Japan Post and changing its business may take up to 10 years to complete, Takenaka said.

Analyst's Take:

The main purpose of the privatization is to achieve efficiency through competition.

The former Japan Postal Service, a state agency, was reorganized as Japan Post on April 1 this year as a public corporation as a first step toward privatization.

Before that, Japan postal service was an absolute state-monopoly, which leads to problems of market inefficiency and high costs. Once the businesses are privatized and begin to compete with the private sector, unnecessary costs can be eliminated and the burden on taxpayers will decrease.

Privatizing the postal service sector will have a positive influence on the economy. Before Japan Postal, three big state corporations - Nippon Telegraph and Telephone (NTT), Japan Tobacco (JT) and Japan Railways (JR) were privatized in the

1980s. Efficiency was improved and costs reduced.

One of the negatives will be the staff cuts will need to happen in the workforce, currently standing at 280,000.

The accumulated rancor between the two different labour unions - "Japan Postal Workers' Union" and "All Japan Postal Labour Union" in the Japan postal sector is an obstacle to innovation.

For a long time, the former have tried to merge with the latter failed due to lack of agreement. Without the cooperation of these two unions, any innovation in the sector can not proceed.

- Zhao Fang, Professor from Economic School of Jilin University

(Wei Lixin)



Four people try to turn over a page on what is claimed to be the world's largest photo collection, just completed by Japanese photographer Rowland Kirishima. The book, whose cover measures 3.07 meters tall and 3.42 meters wide, was unveiled during an event marking the release of a new Mazda car held in Tokyo on July 21. The whole book weighs about 350 kilograms. Organizers of the event said they plan to apply to Guinness World Records for registration as the world's largest photo collection.

Photo by Photocom

Bosch Leads Breach of German 35-hour Week

Paris, July 20 (AFP) - The German 35-hour-week, an audacious experiment to reduce high unemployment, seemed to be at a crossroads Tuesday following a vote by Bosch workers to work extra time without pay to save their jobs.

German politicians and unions were in a state of angst over a vote by workers at a subsidiary of German group Bosch to accept extra unpaid work to avert the relocation of a plant to the Czech Republic.

The Bosch workers, who make auto parts at a factory at Venissieux in southern central Germany, voted by 98 percent to accept working 36 hours instead of 35 hours a week without extra pay in order to keep their plant in Germany. The employees also accepted on Monday that pay would be frozen for three years.

The deal is being seen as something of a watershed in the 35-hour-week experiment. However, several leading German trade union federations expressed indignation at the outcome of the Bosch vote, saying that "blackmail" by Bosch had succeeded.

Government officials said that it was unacceptable for management to force longer hours on workers under a take-it-or-leave-it threat to switch activity to locations in eastern Europe where labour costs are far lower.

The current government, which never liked the idea, was elected on a promise not to change the legal work week but to allow it to work more flexibly, saying that it imposed excessive costs on industry and that its effectiveness was doubtful since unemployment remains high.

Analyst's Take:

Compared with other European countries, Germany is one with above average social welfare standards. The 35-hour week rule is an essential reason which has led to excessively high labor costs nationwide. It has become an unbearable burden to German industries, especially labor-concentrated manufacturing.

In my opinion, Bosch's move is not an individual phenomenon. In the past few years economic growth rates have stagnated in Germany as well as many other countries in Europe. Many companies are seeing successively shrinking revenues. Reducing the costs of production has become increasingly important.

The climbing unemployment rate proved the concept of "everybody works fewer hours more people could have work" wrong. Instead, the 35-hour week rule raises labor costs. Because of higher wages, profit margins keep shrinking. Fewer profits lead to more serious unemployment problems.

- Gu Junli, Special Consultant on German Affairs from Chinese Academy of Social Studies

(Chu Meng)

German, Swiss Exchanges May Merge

Switzerland July 19(Reuters) - Germany's share market Deutsche Boerse plans to merge with Swiss stock exchange SWX, sources told Reuters on Sunday.

The companies listed on a merged Swiss-German stock market would have a combined market capitalization of 1.54 trillion euros (\$1.9 trillion), which would put Deutsche Boerse, currently No.3 in Europe, nearly neck-and-neck with its main euro zone rival Euronext. The London Stock Exchange (LSE) would remain Europe's biggest equity market at 2 trillion euros.

"The SWX Association, owner of SWX Group, is currently scrutinizing the proposals," an SWX spokesman said in a statement. "I can confirm that there is an invitation from the Deutsche Boerse towards deeper cooperation but whether there will be talks must yet be decided."

Deutsche Boerse and Swiss stock

exchange SWX have been working closely together for a number of years. Since 1988, the companies have been partners in the world's largest international derivatives market, Eurex. Together with the US financial media concern Dow Jones & Co., they also share responsibility for the index provider Stoxx Limited.

SWX expressed that it aimed to actively cooperate in the consolidation among European stock exchanges and would consider deals.

Analyst's Take:

A merger would allow investors to trade, clear and settle shares transnationally with both Swiss and German firms. A single point of access using one trading platform if the merger succeeds would help generate cost savings, especially at a time when big users of exchanges are demanding, and getting, cuts in fees.

Moreover, Deutsche Boerse and SWX went separate ways when it came to choosing stock exchange systems, with the German firm choosing electronic trading system Xetra, while SWX opted for the British platform Virt-x. Therefore, a merger would mean significant increases both in the number of stocks traded, and the trading volume.

- Zheng Fuhu, Special Consultant of CITIC Group

Thailand Signs Tourism Agreement

By Wei Lixin

The Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) signed a Memorandum of Understanding between TAT and OAD REIZEN with collaborative travel agencies from other 19 countries last Friday.

Thaksin Shinawatra, the Thai Prime Minister has recently urged the relevant departments to curb unhealthy business practices in the Thai tourism industry, that have blighted it in the past.

Twenty-five Chinese travel agencies have signed the agreement, including almost all the well-known agencies like China International Travel Service, China CYTS Tour Holding, CO., CTI Travel Ltd., and China Comfort Travel.

According to Suwat Jutakorn,

Director of the Beijing Office of TAT Thailand, groups going from China to Thailand have been operating at either very low or negative profit margins. This leads to pressure being put on tourists in resort to buy optional extras or to go to designated stores for shopping.

Besides the Memorandum, a set of regulations on ensuring and supervising travel conditions have been instituted by TAT to safeguard the legal rights of tourists.

Meanwhile, all members of the Thailand-Sino Travel Trade Association have agreed that Chinese tour groups should have a set itinerary before leaving for Thailand. The tour guide should not be encouraged to promote optional programs using high pressure sales techniques.

Animal Cruelty Taped at KFC Supplier

New York, July 20 (CNN), - An animal rights group released a videotape Tuesday showing slaughterhouse workers with a KFC Corp. supplier jumping on live chickens and slamming them into walls, apparently for fun.

In the video, titled "KFC's House of Horror," employees at the plant were seen stepping on the birds, kicking them and slamming them against walls and floors.

"We are appalled at the treatment of the animals shown in the video," said a Pilgrim's Pride spokesman, responding to the video. "These actions are completely contrary to all of our company's practices and policies regarding the humane treatment

of poultry."

The spokesman added that after an investigation, any employee found violating the company's policies on animal welfare would be fired. In a written statement, KFC said, "We do not tolerate animal abuse by any of our suppliers, under any circumstance."

But PETA spokesman Dan Shannon said more action is needed. "What will prevent animals from being tortured is audits of slaughterhouses, having experts go and visit these farms, visit these suppliers on an unannounced basis. So workers know if they abuse an animal they're going to pay the price for it."

Spitzer Says Grasso Made \$190 Million in Eight Years

New York, July 20 (Bloomberg News) - Richard Grasso was paid about \$190 million during his eight years as chairman and chief executive of the New York Stock Exchange, New York Attorney General Eliot Spitzer alleged in a motion filed Monday.

Spitzer's allegation is his first public estimate of Grasso's pay since Grasso resigned as head of the world's largest stock market on Sept. 17. It includes \$140 million Grasso received in August, which propelled some members and investors to call for his ousting. It doesn't include \$48 million that Grasso turned down in Sep-

tember in an attempt to keep his job, Spitzer spokesman Darren Dopp said.

Spitzer, who is suing Grasso to recover at least \$100 million of Grasso's pay, made the estimate in a motion seeking to move the lawsuit back to state court, where Spitzer originally filed it. Grasso's lawyers moved the case to federal court in June.

Spitzer, 45, claimed in his suit that Grasso, 57, manipulated the NYSE's board into granting a pay package that violated state law governing not-for-profit organizations such as the exchange.

Corporate Profits Resurrect Luxury Incentive Travel

July 20 (USA Today) - Rising corporate profits are sending more workers packing - on vacation, that is.

More companies are reviving luxury travel incentives for top performers. Following terrorism and recession in 2001, employers scaled back or eliminated incentive travel.

After a two-year hiatus, software firm Convera of Vienna, Va., revived its annual trip contest. In May, it sent 20 employees on a four-night trip for two to the Four Seasons Resort on

Great Exuma, the Bahamas.

Bruce Himmelstein of luxury-hotel chain Ritz Carlton says incentive-travel bookings top last year's by more than one-third.

Of 50 Fortune 500 companies surveyed by the Business Travel Coalition, most expect to increase their incentive-travel budget next year. A better economy and higher profits are only part of the reason. Companies worry rivals could lure their sales hotshots with their own bonus programs, says Kevin Mitchell of BTC.

Bayer Pays \$2.9 bln for Roche Consumer Drug

Frankfurt / Zurich, July 19 (Reuters) - Bayer AG will buy Roche's over-the-counter (OTC) drugs unit for 2.38 billion euros (\$2.94 billion), the German group said on Monday, paying more than expected to boost its health care profits.

The deal comes shortly after Bayer's decision to spin off to shareholders its Lanxess chemicals unit, representing a fifth of sales, and furthers the transformation of the 141-year-old chemicals and drugs group often criticised as slow to change.

Another part of the overhaul is nearing with the likely sale of Bayer's blood products unit to either Bain Capital or The Carlyle Group for over 400 million

euros, an industry source told Reuters, which will help finance the Roche deal.

Bayer, which invented painkiller Aspirin more than a century ago, said the deal would create a company with sales of 2.4 billion euros and catapult it into the world's OTC drugs top three along with Johnson & Johnson and GlaxoSmithKline Plc from No. 6 last year.

Bayer Chief Executive Werner Wenning told a conference call that his aim was to be number one in OTC. "It was and is our stated goal to enlarge our OTC business further and become number one worldwide ... we are a big step closer," he said.

EC Approves Sony-BMG Music Merger

Berlin, Germany July 19 (AP) - The European Union has approved the merger of Sony Music and Bertelsmann AG's BMG unit in a deal that gives the four "majors" control of about 80 percent of the world music market, a Bertelsmann spokesman said.

"The joint venture will create a recorded music business better able to serve artists and consumers in this rapidly changing marketplace," Bertelsmann chief executive Gunter Thielen said.

The deal leaves 80 percent of the market in the hands of four groups: Sony-BMG, Vivendi Universal, EMI and Warner Music. Sony-BMG and Vivendi Universal control about a quarter each.

The EU initially said the deal could lead to higher CD prices, fewer choices for consumers, and stifle the development of legal online music downloading.

But it concluded after inter-



AFP photo

nal review that it did not have "sufficient evidence" of collusion or future harm to consumers.

Independent music companies have lobbied against approval of the deal, and threatened legal action to overturn the decision.

The 50-50 joint venture is still undergoing antitrust review in the United States and approval is expected within days.

Three Cabbies on Drive for Independence

By Wu Chen

Three local taxi drivers last Friday petitioned to hold a public debate following the Beijing Transportation Bureau's refusal of their previous applications to leave their companies and drive independently.

The bureau accepted applications to operate individually filed by Shao Changliang, Che Dianguang and Wang Xueyong on July 1, the first time such applications have been considered in the capital since 1994.

"All resources in the taxi industry are controlled by a few people. There is a monopoly in the local industry, which is harmful to consumers," Shao told *Beijing Today* on Tuesday.

The Transportation Bureau turned down their applications on July 12 on grounds that the local taxi market was already saturated and strict control needed to be maintained over the number of cabs plying Beijing's streets.

Shao said he and his colleagues only

wanted to be independent of their taxi company, which would not result in an increase of taxi cabs on the street.

Bureau official Wen He told the *Beijing Times* on Sunday that the three men's application for a public hearing was simply a personal demand and not related to an issue of significant public interest. Wen added that the bureau would issue its judgment on the hearings after talking with all parties involved.

Shao's reply to such reasoning was that the development of the taxi industry concerned the interests of tens of thousands of people and the application could help promote reform of current operations in the industry.

"Establishing a model for fair and just competition in the taxi industry would be a win-win-win situation - for the nation, the people and society," Shao was quoted as saying by the *Beijing Times* on Sunday.

Disputed Charges Result in Suicide

By Zhou Ying

Outraged over being suspected of driving under the influence of alcohol, charges he vehemently denied, 41-year-old local man Lu Yingxue hung himself in his home in Xicheng District last Thursday.

A man phoned the *Beijing Times* around 3 pm that afternoon to claim that a neighbor was suicidal over the impounding of his car after being charged with drunk driving. The caller told reporter Yuan Guoli that the desperate neighbor lived in apartment No. 1 in his residential building.

"We went to check it out. When we knocked at the door he mentioned, a woman said that nobody in that home was dead. So we figured the man who called was probably the one who was suicidal and we asked some neighbors for help," Yuan told *Beijing Today* on Monday.

Neighbor Wang Yingbin recalled on Tuesday that when Yuan and other reporters were asking people for assistance, Lu's mother happened to pass by and stopped to see what they wanted.

"They told her that maybe something had happened in her home. She opened the door and we rushed in, but he was already dead. A paper left on a desk in the room read, 'I am innocent!'," Wang said.

Lu's mother said her son was driving his new car in Pinggu County last Wednesday afternoon to deliver a refrigerator when it flipped over for unknown reasons. Traffic police that arrived at the scene suspected Lu of driving drunk and gave him a Breathalyzer test. While the first test came up blank, a second showed the presence of alcohol on his breath, so the officers charged him with drunk driving and confiscated his car.

"He complained constantly that he was innocent after he got home," his mother told the *Beijing Times* on Thursday.

Neighbor Mr. Yang said on Tuesday that Lu was unemployed and received less than 400 yuan a month in government welfare payments.

"He has suffered from epilepsy since the 1980s. I always feared he might have a seizure while he was driving. He borrowed about 60,000 yuan to buy his car, and losing it meant losing his only way of earning money," Yang added.

The traffic police officers involved in the incident told the *Beijing Times* that their conduct followed the letter of the law. "The reason why we did the second test was he did not breathe the first time, so the figure showed zero," one officer said. He added that because Lu insisted he had not drank alcohol before driving, they drew a blood test, the results of which had yet to be officially determined.

Wang Yingbin said Lu's sister was planning to sue the traffic police over the event, but Lu's family refused to comment.



Before hanging himself, Lu left a note in his apartment that read, 'I am innocent!'

Autopsy Clears Zhejiang Police in Suspicious Drowning

By Wu Chen

Medical experts have confirmed that a Zhejiang Province man who died under strange circumstances in a river had drowned and not been the victim of supposed police brutality, the People's Procuratorate of Haining village announced on Tuesday.

The procuratorate office said the conclusion had been made after a postmortem examination, adding the actions of Haining Public Security officers had no legal connection to Lu Haixiang's death.

Beijing Today first reported on the case last Friday.

Lu jumped into a river instead of waiting for police to take him to a nearby police station after he was arrested on May 19. He died in the murky water.

Lu was apprehended for allegedly touching the breast of a waitress singing with him at an entertainment center.

The Haining Public Security Bureau claimed Lu had drowned, but his family and other local people were convinced he had been beaten to death by the police. His family purchased a large freezer chest and used it to preserve Lu's body for nearly month until they agreed for the Zhejiang

Provincial People's Procuratorate to conduct an autopsy.

The postmortem examination report showed no signs Lu had been beaten before he died or was handcuffed when he jumped into the river, the Haining procuratorate said. Bruises on his chest and limbs were attributed to his possibly running into objects or falling as he ran toward the river and plunged in.

Domestic media, however, have raised some questions about the veracity of the report. A *Beijing News* article on Wednesday pointed out that the Haining procuratorate had not done second interviews with witnesses during the course of its investigation.

Three witnesses confirmed that Lu was not handcuffed when he was waiting for the police car, authorities said at the press conference, but the *Beijing News* pointed out that another witness, Jiang Xinfu, had seen Lu be put in cuffs when he was originally arrested at the entertainment center. No mention of Jiang's testimony was made at the press conference.

Lu Haixiang's father, Lu Chusheng, told the *Beijing News* on Tuesday that he was very upset about the report and would appeal the case to higher authorities.



Search dogs stand at the ready to sniff out trapped survivors in Tuesday's emergency rehearsal. Photo by Chen Jie

City Practices for Big Quake

By Chen Si

Rescue teams in yellow uniforms rushed residents in Datun Country out of their homes on Tuesday and into a nearby park, where they immediately saw to the wounded and organized parties to search for anyone trapped in the rubble of buildings shaken to the ground.

"An earthquake measuring 6.5 on the Richter scale hit Datun County, Chaoyang District at 2:30 pm this afternoon, according to the China Center Digital Seismic Network," said a mock press release issued by the Beijing Earthquake Bureau on July 20, as quoted in Wednesday's *Beijing News*.

Of course, there was no such earthquake - the entire event, including the evacuation, was a rehearsal intended to hone residents and professional rescue workers' instincts in case a strong quake does someday hit the capital.

"Beijing has a very dense population. This rehearsal was just meant to get people prepared for unexpected disasters in the future, help prevent unnecessary losses and raise people's awareness of the importance of disaster precautions," Du Pulai, vice director general of the Beijing Earthquake Bureau, was quoted as saying in a Tuesday *Beijing News* article.

Nearly 2,000 people took place in the dry run, including firemen, emergency medical technicians, police, area residents and students, most of whom acted as victims. The sprawling park was covered in over 300 temporary blue shelter tents and quilts, food and other relief necessities were provided.

Besides organizing residents to evacuate buildings and avoid danger zones, Du said, the rehearsal was also meant to test emergency communication networks, systems for the treatment and transfer of the wounded, ways for transmitting emergency information, transportation and distribution of relief supplies.



Zhao says he does not know Rao.



Rao says she has proof to the contrary.

Doctor Shows Evidence Against TV Star

By Zhou Ying

In the latest chapter of a scandal widely covered in local media, Beijing doctor Rao Ying held a press conference at Guobin Dasha (Ambassador Mansion) last Friday to present evidence that she had an intimate relationship several years ago with famed CCTV host Zhao Zhongxiang.

Rao has sued Zhao for mental and physical abuse during their affair, but when she had her first day in court two weeks ago, the hearings were quickly closed because she could not provide sufficient evidence she and Zhao had a relationship and her lawyer was not even present.

To answer some media doubts about her background, she produced two degrees from Beijing

universities, her former student ID card, and a detailed list of the many calls she made to different local government departments when seeking help for her case.

In the court hearing two weeks ago, Zhao's lawyer, Wang Fu, said his client did not know Rao. Hoping to prove otherwise, she showed local media a picture of the two together in front of the Great Hall of the People and then played part of an audiotape of a conversation between her and Zhao.

"I can't play the whole tape back for you," she said, "because the rest is full of dirty words."

Rao also claimed she possessed an ink and wash painting of Zhao's and a skirt stained with his semen. "In China, you cannot conduct DNA tests individu-

ally, so I must seek help from the court," she said.

After the conference, Zhao was interviewed by local media and repeated his claims that Rao was a complete stranger. He told the *Beijing Times* last Friday that he did not give any credence to anything said or done regarding the case outside court. "I am confident the law will explain everything," he added.

"I did not take any evidence with me because I wasn't informed that it would be an official hearing," Rao was quoted as saying in a sina.com report two weeks ago on why she went to court unprepared. She then threatened to hand over incriminating tapes to national media if Zhao continued to deny the two had been lovers.

Silk Street Evades Wrecking Ball, Again

By Chu Meng

The Silk Street, or Xiushui, market, has managed to live a little longer since local authorities postponed a public hearing planned for this Thursday on the issue of demolishing the famed outdoor shopping area and tourist site.

"The public hearing will be held when all preparations are made," Su Min, head of the Ji'anwai Sub-District Office that oversees the commercial street, said Wednesday.

The local government's proposed plans to take down the market for reasons of fire danger and improving road safety and traffic flow, have proven controversial among the public and drawn sharp criticism from market shop owners.

Seeking a solution to the long-running debate over Silk Street's fate, the government originally decided to hold two separate gatherings this Thursday and Friday to solicit opinions from representatives of shop owners and the general public.

Silk Street market, built in 1984 near one of Beijing's embassy areas, receives 20,000 to 30,000 visitors a day and generates annual turnover in excess of 100 million yuan.

It has become one of the three best-known destinations for foreign tourists in Beijing along with the Great Wall and the Forbidden City.

School Plagued by Stubborn Weed

By Wu Chen

Teachers at Beijing No. 47 Middle School struggled last Friday to remove ragweed growing just outside the school's grounds, only to see the unwanted plants reappear the next day.

Ragweed, the pollen from which can spark asthma, allergic reactions and skin problems when the plants bloom in July, grows thick to the north of the school's campus and stands as high as two meters tall.

Nearby resident Mo Rong told *Beijing News* on Sunday that the local government had sent people to clean out the troublesome weed twice, but the problem was never completely solved and the plants were only growing taller.

Guo Jinghua, principal of the No. 47 Middle School, said ragweed started growing in the area in the 1980s and the government sent people to pull it every year.

However, after seeming to go away for several years, it burst out again this summer, she added.

Capital Launches English Learning Regimen

By Jiang Lin

In an attempt to improve Beijing's English skills, two organizations will publish and pass out free copies of *300 English Sentences for Family Learning* textbooks this September.

The books are just one part of the Beijing Women's Federation and Women's Foreign Language Publications of China's joint activity called "Bringing English to Millions of Families," scheduled to run in the capital from 2004 to 2008. Their plans call for donating books to three million families and organizing public English classes and contests.

"This will certainly improve the English levels of Beijing citizens and contribute to the success of the 2008 Olympics," Ai Hongzhen, an administrator at the project development section of Women's Foreign Language Publications, said Monday.

The text of *300 English Sentences for Families Learning* includes daily expressions, situational dialogs and key words closely connected to real-life interactions, such as buying water or asking directions. The books will come with matching CDs for listening practice, according to Ai.



Xiao Xiansu, one of the defendants, crying in court

Photo by Liu Chan

The Law Works Overtime

by Wu Chen

At 10:00 pm, July 16, the first round of court hearings on the Chongqing gas well blowout ended. Lasting for three days in Chongqing No. Two Intermediate People's Court, the long hours that the court was in session every day has provoked concern in society at large.

The hearings began at 9:30 am on July 14, and ended at 8:30 pm that day. On July 15, it continued until midnight. On average, the court sat over 12 hours per day. Would the long days have affected the judicial process?

The gas well blowout happened on December 23, 2003, at a natural gas field in Kaixian Town operated by China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC). A high concentration of natural gas and sulfurated hydrogen was released. Over 4,000 local inhabitants were injured, and 243 died. This was one of the worst industrial disasters in China in recent years.

Chongqing Public Security units began to investigate on January 2, and on January 10 and 15, arrests were made of six suspects, namely Wu Hua, Wu Bin, Xiao Xiansu, Wang Jiantong, Song Tao and Xiang Yiming, all employees of CNPC. They were charged with causing the accident through dereliction of duty.

During the 40-hour hearing, the public prosecutor read out the indictment and the court conducted judicial investigations of the six held liable for the fatal accident. The public prosecution department gave out testimonies to the court and debates were held.

CNPC general manager Ma Fucui resigned in April with an acknowledgment of breach of duty. **Yan Wei, a judge in Henan Province**

The court hearing lasted 40 hours over three days. I don't think these so-called "continual hearings" should be advocated.

The Criminal Procedure Law of the People's Republic of China regulates the time for inquisition strictly. It writes that the time for summons and detention mustn't last over 12 hours. It also applies to the court-hearing phase.

Although the laws in China don't clearly regulate the length of time under which hearings should be conducted, it is improper not to allow the defendants to get enough rest. It is opposed to the spirit of civilized justice we advocate.

As this is an important case, the court hopes to get results quickly. The motive is good. But these long hearings reflect that they didn't think about the right way to achieve their aims.



The six accused in court

Photo by Liu Chan

The court must handle cases while emphasizing the justice of the procedure. A continual court hearing is efficient, but efficiency without procedural justice may hurt the judicial process itself.

The defendants may be guilty, but they still have basic rights according to the law. The court hearing must insist on normal legal procedures. It should not work over time just to finish the case as soon as possible.

I hope there won't be this kind of "continual hearing" any more.

Ruan Qilin, professor, Institute of Criminal Law, China University of Political Science and Law

There isn't any clear regulation under Chinese law about the length of time for court hearings, so what happened in Chongqing No. Two Intermediate People's Court was not illegal.

This gas well case has wide social implications, so thus the basic conclusion for how to deal with the whole thing has been made before the court hearing commenced. The court phase is the final one in the proceedings, and the court hearing has little influence over the result. Having a continual hearing won't affect the justice of the outcome.

Besides, although the social influence of this case is huge, the charge is actually not too serious. The defendants committed a negligent crime. The maximum possible sentence will be up to seven years imprisonment. There is no need for the court to extend the hearing time to achieve certain aims as some people have said.

The most important procedure for dealing with such a big industrial disaster is to make sure the families of the victims are well compensated, as well as dealing with those responsible.

In a long hearing, it is the judges who will be the most tired, not the defendants and their lawyers, as they will be questioned turn by turn. They had time to rest. So there is no need for laypeople to start making assumptions about whether the hearing is fair or not.

We don't advocate having trials in this way, and it cannot be said to be good, but it is not wrong.

Yang Younan, lawyer from Beijing Guowei Law Office

This way of court hearing will influence the judicial process, in my opinion, because working these long hours will certainly lower the advocacy quality of the defendants' lawyers and the ability of the judges.

The courts hearing important cases like the Chongqing gas well burst should be more careful. They should not hold continual hearings. Common sense should preclude it.

But although I myself haven't come across such a situation, I also know that this kind of hearing is common in many courts, especially at the year end when they must finish some cases as soon as possible.

There are no specific regulations about the time spent in court in Chinese laws. Maybe there are some inner policies about it in the courts and maybe the courts in different places have different policies. If I come across this situation as a defendant's lawyer, I don't think I could accuse the judge, for there are no specific laws.

Guo Weizhen, a graduate student in the School of Law of Peking University

I think such a long court hearing is wrong. It will definitely affect the judicial process. Because China now has no specific laws about the court time, what Chongqing No. Two Inter-

mediate People's Court did isn't strictly wrong, but I think it is wrong from the perspective of the theory of the law.

Cao Wen, a university student

The gas well blowout in Chongqing is a big case. It injured many people and drew a lot of attention. The investigation and inquisition process should be fair, transparent and scientific.

The investigation lasted for quite a long time, which proved the complexity of the case, but the first round of court hearings only took three days, even though they worked long hours during those days.

The judges will be tired, which will influence the fairness of the verdict they make in the end.

The motives for doing these also seem a bit doubtful. It seems that they want to cover some truths through having such a short hearing in order to protect someone.

A net friend from sina.com

The people in charge of dealing with the case disobeyed the procedures just the same as the defendants who disobeyed operating procedures. They are both wrong. They are also in dereliction of duty.

Without a proper judicial process, the result will be questioned. We call for civilized justice, but this case disobeys the procedures publicly. The case is being watched by people all over China, even abroad.

It exposes the long-term problem that the government can intervene in the law in China.

A net friend from sina.com

Why are you sympathizing with these people who were derelict in their duty? Try to think about the hundreds of people dead in the disaster! They have been deprived of their rights. How dare they ask for the right to rest?

Big Momma is Watching You

By Jiang Lin

All parents worry if they have to spend long periods of time away from their children, especially those who have busy working lives. But parents using a new website developed by Shenzhen Telecom need worry no longer. Just log on to "Baby Online" and you will be able to see your child while they are at kindergarten. A camera has been installed in two Shenzhen kindergartens as a trial, but seems to have found favor with parents, who can register to have an account with the website. Uptake has increased on the service by 20% since January, according to the Guangzhou News, July 9. And even if you do not have time to watch live, you can watch stored footage from the previous three days.

Guangzhou telecom has announced they could offer the online project to all kindergartens in Guangzhou. But is everybody as enthusiastic as the Telecoms companies would have us believe?

About half the parents welcomed the experiment, but most teachers didn't, believing their work could be influenced. Ark Market Research conducted a small market research survey (100 households) in Guangzhou, where some respondents felt that it had implications for the right to privacy, for both teachers and students.

Half of those questioned were parents, and of them 50% said they would choose a kindergarten equipped with cameras. 69.9% said it would ensure their child would be well looked after. But 24% of the parents wouldn't choose this kind of kindergarten. 18.5% of the parents said "children probably don't favor it" while 15.4% thought it would impinge on the privacy of children. 16.9% said it would increase parents' burden, such as investing even more on their education.

60.4% of the respondents thought that it would influence the normal work of the teachers and 37.5% would not choose this kind of kindergarten because it would impinge on the privacy of teachers.

Wang Zongyu, vice-professor of Law in Renmin University

I think it impinges on the civil rights of children and probably their privacy. No law prescribes that kindergartens can surveil children. They would be under surveillance all the time and it is bad for their development. How would they grow up if they had been watched since childhood? Would they be proud or afraid of being watched?

Also it may expose the privacy of teachers and the commercial secrets of kindergartens through transmitting information online. It can also increase parents' expenditure. So I disapprove of the online project being used in kindergartens.

Wang Yun, licensed lawyer, founder of Genesis Law Firm

Kindergartens who are qualified to provide this online project are responsible to society. The kindergartens will have increased their source of recruiting children. The parents and their children will have become more intimate than before. Also the telecom companies will have extended their service range. So why not popularize the service?

Mrs. Huang, resident of Liwan Street, Guangzhou

I would send my daughter to a kindergarten with an online project installed because my husband and I are too busy at work. If the online project is put into practice, we can see our daughter playing and resting and learning in the kindergarten any time we want.

Lu Jingjing, kindergarten teacher, Panjin, Liaoning Province

I disapprove of installing monitor cameras in the classroom. Children perform differently in different situations. When they know they are being watched, they learn and play as required; they may get into bad habits

of disguising their actions. They could get addicted to escaping restrictions given by parents and teachers. This is not a good way for children to develop.

Teacher Liu, kindergarten teacher, Guangzhou

The online project will provide convenient communication between teachers and parents. Teachers can behave more normally in and out of class under surveillance.

In the past, parents always worried about what their kids learnt in kindergartens or whether teachers scolded them. If parents already know what's going on in the kindergarten, we don't have to explain more to the parents if they have anxieties about their child.

Teacher Luo, kindergarten teacher, Yuexiu District, Guangzhou

It would impinge on the privacy of teachers and bring mental pressure on them. Each action is being watched. Although teachers are not quick to scold, sometimes we need to choose different ways to teach different children. But parents don't understand about all the different methods of teaching.

Mr. Qiu, Manager of an Accountancy Firm

I'm afraid that it will influence parents to watch their children during normal working hours. The online project may distract the staff's attention from their job when they are sharing the "happiness" of their child in the kindergarten while at work themselves.

Zou, manager of a kindergarten, Baiyun District, Guangzhou

It will affect our commercial secrets. The selling points of key kindergartens depend on teaching and management methods. If cameras are being installed in kindergartens, daily operations will be available to the public on the Internet. This will be a threat to us.

Yan Jianguo, Lawyer, Beijing Xinli Law Firm

China hasn't a special law to protect privacy as an absolute right up to now. According to the Chinese law, this practice does not mean that parents are impinging on the privacy of their children. Parents can supervise their children better if there are cameras. They can also give suggestions to improve the kindergarten so that children can grow healthily and safely. It is good to start an online project like this.

Not all the teachers' actions should be private. Parents and even society should supervise teachers. They can also be more responsible at their work, which would improve the entire educational quality of the kindergarten.

Monitors were installed in one famous kindergarten in Beijing seven or eight years ago. It was well received at the time.

Mrs. Zhu, a housewife living in Beijing

I can make certain that my kids are being well taken care of and not being hurt or wronged. But I'm afraid other parents will see my kids' privacy. If both teachers and parents agree to being viewed on the Internet, there's no imposing on anyone.

Yue Yunsheng, Lawyer, Beijing Yuecheng Law Firm

The market will give a reasonable evaluation to new innovations. The popularization of the Internet provides more advantages and choices. But kindergartens and parents should pay more attention to their kids' privacy on the Internet. We should demand that suitable regulations be drawn up as soon as possible in order to find an effective solution to this problem.

It cannot impinge on the teachers' privacy though it may give them some mental pressure. Commercial secrets cannot be lost due to this online project, either. It is commercial behavior to put cameras in, in the hope that they will attract more parents.

By Dong Nan

It is well known that China has an infinite supply of laborers, willing to work long hours in jobs with low pay. But this year, some regions of China, including the boom provinces of Fujian and Guangzhou suffered a serious labor shortage.

It has been pointed out that this could be the beginning of an important change in national conditions. The consequences could be far-reaching although the full extent of the problem is unknown.

An unexpected shortage

"I have tried to recruit new workers for a month, but I have only managed to find 20 people so far," complained Wu Yifei, boss of Jinjiang Xiangyu Shoes Company, a small-scale company in Jinjiang, Fujian, to *Southern Weekend*.

From 8 am to 6 pm everyday, Wu sits in a temporary outdoor labor force market in Wuqiaotou, Jinjiang, together with dozens of bosses who face the same dilemma as he does. Usually, two to three people show interest in working for Wu everyday. But now, sometimes the number of employers exceeds that of job seekers.

According to Liu Gui, human resource manager at Dimei Shoes Company, Chendai town, Jinjiang, a year ago, if the factory lacked labor, all he had to do was to put a bulletin outside the factory with the word "recruiting", and enough workers would come within a few days.

"This year, the factory planned to open a new production line, which needed 100 more workers. And I did the same thing as before. But after one month, the bulletin had faded under the sun, and only 20 people came," he told *Southern Weekend*, "and the new production line has had to be left unused."

In Anhai Town, Jinjiang, there used to be seven agents to help peasant workers find work, now there are only three left.

"There are less and less peasant workers coming, and our business becomes hard to continue," said Huang Shanna, a boss of one of the three agents, "In our agency, there are about 1,000 vacancies for peasant workers entrusted to us by companies and factories, but everyday, less than 20 people come in to enquire about jobs."

According to the Corporation Survey Group, Fujian Province, after the Spring Festival of 2004, 15% to 20% of factories in Jinjiang had to stop production because they lacked workers. In the chinaware production industry, the number was nearer 50%.

The problem was also felt in the Pearl River Delta, Guangzhou province. The first place where peasant workers were hired en masse as a form of cheap labor is now suffering the lack of an estimated two million workers, ac-

Labor Shortage Creates Industrial Slowdown



Much of the dangerous and dirty work in cities is under taken by peasant workers

Photo by Photocore

After the Spring Festival of 2004, 15% to 20% of factories in Jinjiang had to stop production because they lacked workers. In the chinaware production industry, the number was nearer 50%.

In the Pearl River Delta, Guangzhou province, the first place where peasant workers were hired en masse as a form of cheap labor is now suffering the lack of an estimated two million workers.

In Changsha, Hunan Province, the number of female peasant workers who came to the city to find work as child carers has reduced by 70% since march of this year.

cording to local media sources.

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Fair pay for fair work

"Peasant workers' basic rights

have been neglected. This is the reason why there is a labor shortage in Guangdong," said Qiao Xinsheng, a professor of economics in Zhongnan Finance and Economy University to *Beijing News*, "and Guangdong people should pay for that."

Guangdong is one of the rich-

est provinces in China, but salaries for peasant workers are unbelievably low – only 200 to 300 yuan a month. This figure has remained unchanged from the mid 90's to the present day.

"I used to work in a paper mill in Chang'an Town, Dongwan, Guangdong Province," said Yongyong, a Henan resident on 163.com, "everyday we worked from 8 am to midnight, some times to 1 – 2 am, and except for two hours for meals, we worked more than 12 hours per day."

Yongyong's salary was 500 yuan a month, but 200 yuan would be taken out as board and lodging. "The food was awful, all vegetables, without much oil. I worked there for less than three months and lost 15 kilograms in weight."

"I would never work in Guangdong again," he said.

"Peasant workers have become more and more rational," said Qiao Xinsheng, "and they can choose those areas that provide more stability and security for them."

According to Jiao Bifang, a professor of Economics, Fudan

University, Fujian, Guangzhou and Zhejiang provinces are all economically developed areas in China. From the end of the last century, the economy improved and prices increased, but pay for peasant workers did not. So they will move to places that are more attractive to them.

Improve the communication

Some believe that the current labor shortage reveals the shortcomings of the economic structure and the lack of an effective information channel.

In Chendai Town, which is known as a "town of shoes", there are some 3,000 shoe production factories. Larger ones have thousands of employees; while smaller ones have but several family members.

"Making shoes does not need high-tech or special training, and does not need much investment. So there are more and more shoe factories here," said Liu Gui.

Yang Yisheng, vice chief of the Development Research Center, Fujian Province pointed out that the development of those manufacturing industries that do not

need high-tech mainly depend on a large and increasing low cost labor force.

In Jinjiang, the financial income of local people was 2 billion in 2002. In 2003, this figure increased to 2.7 billion, a rise of 30%. The influx of the floating labor force could not keep pace with the booming economy.

But many rural areas of China still have a surplus of labor. Cai Fang, president of the Population and Labor Institute, Chinese Social Sciences Academy told *Southern Weekend* that it is because communication regarding employment is not as good as it could be at present. When certain areas have a shortage in the supply of labor, areas with an excess will not immediately be made aware of it.

"In the mid 1990's, when the economy was in deflation, many peasant workers who left home could not find work and had to stay in railway stations. That was because of an ineffective information channel. And now we are at the other extreme," said Cai.

Source: Southern Weekend)

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Allegations of Fraud in Grassroots Elections

By Dong Nan

Recently, for the second time, votes have been cast in direct grassroots elections to elect village committee members. Ballots have been cast in 11 provinces and municipalities including Beijing, in over 200,000 villages. Village leaders normally serve a term of 3 years.

But the course of the elections was not as smooth as it might be in some areas.

Fight for the ballot box

On July 10, villagers in Changqing Village, Sijiqing, Haidian District voted for their village leaders. But during the course of the election, some villagers snatched the ballot box containing the votes. They refused to turn it over until local police came. Feng Cungui, one of the candidates played an important role in the affair.

According to *Beijing Youth Daily*, before the election, Feng hung posters around the village, promising six campaign pledges. These included solving problems with retirement pensions, compensation for requisitioned land, building entertainment centers for old people, lowering of the winter heating fees and helping the unemployed to find work.

"What Feng said is not practical," said Wang Qiming, the head of local election office to *Beijing Youth Daily* on July 15, "It is fair for candidates to make promises to villagers, but they should not exaggerate."

He said that village committees did not have the right to manage the financial income of the village, so many of Feng's promises were empty.

The local election office forbid Feng to hang his posters on the grounds that each candidate's campaign should be arranged by the office in a fair manner. What he did was unfair to the other candidates. Feng was not happy with the outcome.

"They really deprived me of my legal rights," he complained to *Beijing News*.

On the day of the election, July 10, things went smoothly at first. However, when evening came and the election was drawing to an end, staff brought another ballot box into the room. People who for physical reasons are unable to attend the election in person are helped to vote at their homes. Feng and a dozen supporters stated that they had not known previously of the existence of that box, and doubted whether voting had been properly scrutinized.

They began to quarrel with the staff in the election office. One of Feng's supporters took the box and refused to return it. Only at 2 am the next day, when local police came and told them that the ballot box violated the law did, the villagers gave it back.

"I do not think people who supported me violated the law," said Feng to *Beijing Youth Daily* on July 15, "though they had the box, they did not remove it from the office."

"If villagers doubt the fairness of the election, they should complain to a higher authority instead of taking the ballot box, which surely violates the law anyway," Wang Jinhua, an official in the Ministry of Civil Affairs told *Beijing Today*.

According to Su Wenfang, an official of the government of Haidian District in charge of election work in villages, the same problem of candidates or villages doubting the fairness of the elections happened in three other villages in Haidian District as well, though not as drastic as that in Changqing Village.

Bribe or not?

In Fanrong Village, Panggezhuang, Daxing District, a series of odd things happened before the election on July 10.

On the evening of July 9, many villagers received a "model vote" from people who were known as working for the current village committee, and those people promised that villagers could receive 20 yuan after the election if they voted following the model.



Village elections which took place in 2002

Photo by Li Shuzhuan

There are no laws to ensure the obligations and rights of candidates in China, but we should be patient, and the whole system will be improved step by step.

—Wang Jinhua, an official in the Ministry of Civil Affairs

The "model vote" was a manuscript of the formal voting slip, which had the name of five candidates on it, but there was a line on the bottom, "circle the name of Zhu and Zhang, and add the name of Liu Junyu." Zhu, Zhang and Liu Junyu are all current members of the village committee.

Some villagers thought that this was very strange and reported it to the local election office, but afraid of a possible comeback from the current village committee, they did not dare bear witness publicly.

A villager called Zhang Qing died suddenly on the morning of July 10, however, his father still voted on his behalf in the afternoon election. Zhang's father told *Beijing News* that he voted for Zhu, Zhang and Liu because "They always take care of us."

"Zhang Qing was dead. How could he take part in an election? Why didn't the current members of the village committee stop his father from doing this? It is unfair," said Guo, a villager to *Beijing News*.

On July 12, a working group from the local government came to investigate the issue, but many people who received the "model" dared not come out. Only eight people admitted that they had received it.

Zhu, Zhang and Liu denied that they had sent around the "model vote" and attempted to bribe people during the election.

On July 16, the local government concluded that the sending of a "model vote" was "misleading" instead of a bribe, and the result of the election on July 10 still stood. The votes of the eight who admitted that they had received the model would be deducted from Zhu, Zhang and Liu's votes.

But still many villagers and the local election office were not satisfied with the results. Further investigations are now underway.

investigations are now underway.

Candidate was arrested

Tangshang Village, Gaojialing County, Xingcheng, Liaoning Province held an election in May for members of the village committee.

Li Xiaolong, a 31-year-old local businessman participated and wrote villagers an open letter in April, in which he promised that he would exploit local resources and help local villagers become rich.

However, on April 21, the government of Gaojialing County held a meeting to announce that Li's open letter "violated the law", and deprived Li of the right to be a candidate.

The vote was held on May 3. But Li was taken by Gaojialing police on the grounds of "disturbing public order", and arrested for 15 days. However, Li still won half the votes from Tangshang villagers.

"Though Li is a member of the village, he did not pay tax here. And since he won the contract to operate the bathhouse with the village committee in 2001, we lost 100,000 yuan," said Xiao Jiushi, the party secretary of Gaolingxiang, "we thought that he was not capable as a candidate."

However, villagers had a different opinion. "I believe Li is capable of helping us to get rich. Besides, we have the right to elect him; if he is not capable, we have the right of recall as well. But the county government deprived us of this right, which is granted by the constitution," a villager who would not give his name told Xinhua. He believed that the unfair treatment Li suffered was because he offended the interests of local officials.

"There must be many schemes involved in this. Why did the county government behave like this? I really cannot understand," said Li Dehou, a member of the local election office, who took charge of scrutinizing the balloting.

The matter is still under investigation by the Xingcheng government, and the committee members of Tangshan Village have not been elected.

Wang Jinhua pointed out to *Beijing Today* that there are no laws to ensure the obligations and rights of candidates in China. There are no unified qualifications for candidates, and different places have different standards. That also leads to problems.

"But we should be patient, and the whole system will be improved step by step," he said "direct elections for village committee members is still something new in China anyway."



A gamble bets by phone, while watching alive webcast from Myanmar.

No Escape for Online Gambling Addicts

By Zhou Ying

Thirty six online gamblers were arrested in June in Yiwu city, Zhejiang Province. Formerly famous for its household goods industry, it has now become infamous as a centre of online gambling.

The most popular form of gambling is Baccarat, or "Bai Jia Le". Gamblers bet against the banker to guess who will have the highest score. If they are correct they can double their stake, otherwise if they lose, the banker or house takes all.

But the online gambling houses did not originate in China, but across the border in Myanmar (Burma).

Wu Cuicai, one of the police investigators told CCTV last Friday that the gambling houses were live on online via a web-cam, which means people in the Chinese mainland could participate. "It is so easy. All you need to do is to log on the website after entering the password they provide," he added.

How to gamble on the net

Online gambling has grown exponentially in Yiwu city since the Spring Festival of 2004. An investigation conducted by public security officers showed that there were more than 20 gambling houses at the height of the craze.

A single computer with access to the Internet, and a long distance telephone is all the domestic organizers, or bankers, need to open a gambling house in a hotel or even in their own home, after they have made contact with a foreign gambling house. The participants watch the game over the net, while placing their bets over the phone lines. "Those gambling houses are open all night, and the trade is quite brisk," said Wu Cuicai.

According to the investigation, more than a hundred people in Yiwu city became addicted to online Baccarat, and most of them suffered enormous losses.

The police said that the majority of players are private entrepreneurs. Some of them even lost as much as several million yuan.

According to the rules of Baccarat, the average stake each time is from eighty thousand to 200 thousand yuan per table, and a new round begins nearly every minute and a half. Therefore, for one gambling house, the cash turnover will be around three million to eight million yuan per day. Because of the high number of stakes, many players quickly lost their life savings.

Tao Xiyan, one of the gamblers in Yiwu city, used to possess four excavators before he became addicted to online Baccarat. Now, he owes a debt of several million Yuan, and he was forced to sell three of his excavators. "Last year, many of our people gambled, ending up with their family broken up," Tao told a CCTV journalist last Friday.

Tao said that the reason the game attracted him is that he need not pay cash up front. In fact, the domestic banker for the game will front the player a certain amount of chips depending on the reputation and financial situation of the players. They will settle accounts after they have finished gambling. Consequently it is easy for players to let their guard down. "If they do not pay for us, we cannot afford to play. How can we get such a large amount of cash!" he added.

There are many other ways for the bankers at home and abroad to win beside funding the players. Fang Aiping, the biggest banker and the leader of the online gambling organizers in Yiwu city, said that af-

ter gambling himself in Myanmar, he went back to his hometown and became a banker there. "We can deduct 1.5 percent from the total chips we sell. Moreover, we can also get five to 50 percent of the money that the players lose to the gambling house in Myanmar as a kickback. So till now, I have earned more than 600 thousand Yuan since I became a banker," he said.

But the biggest winners are the real bosses in Myanmar, not the middle men in China.

The police estimated that more than a hundred million yuan has flowed out of China. "The players will put money into domestic accounts, and then directly transfer to the foreign gambling houses, or they will dispatch cars to China to fetch the money."

Falling into the net

On June 10, local police in Zhejiang Province captured 36 criminals suspected of involvement in the participation and organization of online gambling. The police said that besides Yiwu City, they have found evidence of similar crimes in Dongyang, Cixi, Hangzhou, and Shanghai.

In an interview with Shi Xinhui, the deputy director general of the local public security bureau told CCTV that it was quite hard for the police to crack down on the case, because of the use of the Internet.

Answering how people in Yiwu city make contact with the Myanmar gambling houses, Shi said that people who have been to Myanmar to gamble became familiar with people there, and they will rent gambling tables to them. The local bankers can contact them by telephone.

The police revealed that you cannot participate in online gambling if you are a stranger. "Only people that the banker knows are able to participate. They are quite familiar with each other. Therefore the players cannot repudiate the debt."

According to Tao Xiyan, people in Yiwu city enjoyed playing mah-jong before the appearance of online gambling. "The banker cheated me by telling me it was legal to participate in online gambling because it came from Myanmar, and they told us that many people become millionaires in this way."

Guo Qiquan, deputy director of the scientific research department at the Chinese People's Public Security University, said that players did not understand that gambling on the net was a crime and not just a game.

Austere Situation

According to Guo Qiquan, there are more and more cases of online crime in China, and the prospects are not that bright. From October in 2003 to January this year, Beijing Customs has discovered and captured hundreds of flyers from abroad about gambling, and four thousand video disks about.

There are other kinds of online gambling popular in China beside Baccarat. One is "duqiu" a game where players guess what position a ball will be on screen when it stops. They also bet on the results of football matches and on the online Mark Six lottery from Hong Kong.

The main problem is that online gambling is a trans-national crime, and it is very hard to obtain evidence. "We have to use the same methods they do to catch them," Guo continued.

Speaking of the criminals in Myanmar, Shi said that two of them are prepared to surrender to the police. "We can seek help from the police in Yunnan Province. I believe that through our cooperation, we can spread a dragnet from which there will be no escape."



The gambling houses were live on online.

By Li Ruifen

“From Ritual to Cutting Edge,” the kongo Kingdom Art Exhibition at the National Museum (till October 9th, 30 yuan for admission) gives visitors a vivid idea of the ancient kongo kingdom, an area presently covered by the Republic of Congo, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Angola. Among the 300 or so objects on display, there are statues, every day objects, ritual objects and arts and crafts.

With his influence in the field, he has compiled the exhibition, some from his own private collection, some borrowed from African museums or other collectors. He hopes the exhibition will enable Chinese people to understand more about African culture.

A Childhood Dream

Marc was exposed to African art at an early age. Aged 13, when he first saw objects from the Congo, he was “surprised by the beauty, by the power and also by the inventiveness of the artist.” He could not believe that those beautiful and wonderful things were made by people who were considered “naked, stupid like animals” and who “ran around, eating each other”. Even today, when recalling this old story, he still talks with great passion. “It’s impossible. How can people who made such beautiful art do things like that? I wanted to go and see.”

In 1959, when Marc was 17 years old, his childhood dream came true. Without a penny in his pocket, Marc boarded a ship headed for Africa. While working his passage, he tried to learn some simple language. By the time he arrived he had a vocabulary of some 200 words. “With these 200 words, I was able to get around. The Congolese were very friendly. They gave me food and lodging, and invited me to hunt with them.”

After that first visit, the choice for Marc was simple. He stayed there, first for one and a half years, and then went back to Belgium to join the army. As soon as he left the army, he returned to Africa.

A Magical Land

The land of Africa is full of magic. When Marc’s feet touched the land of the Congo for the first time, it was love at first sight. “It was wonderful. People were funny, they were singing and dancing and making music. I was a child of 17 years old. There were beautiful girls and friendly people. And I went there not only to see the landscape. More importantly, I went there to see the art.”

The first days in the forest were not easy. In 1959, the Congo was still a colony, referred to as Belgium Congo (later Zaire, now Democratic Republic of Congo). Although the local people did not treat him as an invader, he could never truly be one of them. “Because I was a white man in the village, some people resented that I was treated favorably by the chief and other people. Even if I were black, I was still an interloper. You could only belong to the village if you were born there.” Marc was deeply attracted by the beauty and peace of the country. He settled down in the forest, and devoted the rest of his life to researching ancient art of the Congo basin.

Much of the time, when not pursuing his love of art, he worked for foreign companies as an intermediary between them and the local people. When foreign companies wanted to hire workers, he would go to the chiefs, who are

Marc Leo Felix, the famous expert on African art, has been devoted to researching the art of the Congo for more than 40 years. Now, he has comes to China with his collection for an inspiring exhibition on the mysterious art from Africa.

The Man Behind the Masks



Marc Leo Felix, art historian and curator at the Congo Basin Art History Research Center Brussels, Belgium.

Photos by Tian Xiaotong

heads of tribes, and ask them for help. It was not so easy to see a chief. “A chief is a big man, and I had to wait a long time. They would study who I was, what I was doing there and how I behaved. And if the chief decided he didn’t like me, I still wouldn’t have a chance to see him.” Despite the difficulties, Marc made friends with many chiefs. One of them even wanted to come to the opening of the exhibition in Beijing, but failed to get a visa.

Even nowadays,

mere mention of Africa can conjure up images, which are not necessarily positive. Having lived in the Congo for several decades, Marc found African society to be well organized and properly structured. “Everybody knows his role. They know what is the job of a man and what is the job of a woman.”

Polygamy is still common in some African tribes. A man can marry as many as forty wives. According to Marc, it is a show of African people’s idea of family. “In Africa, it is very important for people to belong to a tribe, a clan, or a family. If a woman is not under a man’s



Felix in front of Ndunga mask and grass costume

“It’s a way to reconstruct history, because art never lies to people. The Congo has lost its written languages, but these art objects are full of messages. You just have to know how to translate.”

protection, she has no social status.”

Thanks to his close contact with local people and painstaking research, Marc is now an authority on rituals of the Congo. He has witnessed funerals, and he himself has experienced the ritual of boys’ initiation. One ritual is divination, similar to that of rituals known to have taken place in the early Zhou Dynasty. Objects, including rat tail, antelope horn, monkey and bird bones, plant, seeds and shells, are thrown on the ground. The diviner will be able to forecast the future according to their position.

Marc has even experienced things that normal people could never imagine. He told of seeing a dead man buried in a hole in the ground. Seven days later, when they pulled him out, the man was alive. “It was true magic, and they were real magicians. But it takes time to see it. They would never put an advertisement on the wall, saying ‘tonight there will be a magic show’.”

Although they have such a profound and important culture, African people have not realized the importance of protecting it before. They burned objects left by their ancestors, pulled down old houses to build new ones. Marc has tried to preserve as much as he could. “Nobody knew about it, so I had to study it, because it was disappearing. If I and many people like me don’t do what we do, we would never know about the past.” When he found someone wanted to burn something, he would stop them and even pay them money. “It’s a way to reconstruct history, because art never lies to people. The Congo has lost its written languages, but these art objects are full of messages. You just have to know how to translate.”

“When I went to the Congo, I felt I came too late, 50 years too late. They were destroying their history. So it was a miracle to find even a very small thing. I did what I did because I loved those things, and I didn’t want to see them being destroyed.”

To become an “African”

When Marc first arrived, he was considered too young to be a threat to the local people. He

Wooden staff featuring effigies and icons sacred to the tribe



Ancient wooden ritual masks from early to late 19th century.

discovered he was able to communicate well with them. Soon after, he was given the opportunity to undergo the initiation ceremony, one of the most important rituals in the life of a male in the Congo. With the other boys, he stayed in the forest for more than 3 months, and endured all kinds of suffering. He learnt everything about life: how to farm, hunt and work, how to build roads and houses. He learnt the secrets of the tribe and their secret language. “I wanted to learn more about their culture, I wanted to know their secrets, so I wanted to be initiated, and then I was. And after initiation, a boy will become a man.”

A tough life

Life in the Congo is tough and full of danger, but Marc was never scared. “I can

sleep on the floor, drink from the river, make my own house, make fire and hunt. Sometimes I walked 200 km to get somewhere, because there was no road. But it is the life of a man.” Material things in the modern world mean nothing to him, “What’s important in life? To have food, drink and a dry place to sleep, not too hot or too cold. You have good friends and nice people around you. I had this in the Congo. I don’t need air conditioning or TV.” In the evening, Marc and his friends would sit around the fire, and listen to old people telling stories. They shared experiences and knowledge about life.

In Africa, the biggest threat comes not from people or animals, but from insects. Marc almost died several times. “One morning, I looked into the mirror, and saw a worm in my eye. I went to African doctors. They gave me medicine to drink. Then I took a piece of bamboo, and picked it out by myself.” Because of endemic disease including malaria and other insect borne diseases, and the more modern threat of HIV/AIDS, there is a high mortality rate in Africa. Marc’s local friends whom he made when he first arrived in the Congo have all died, leaving him alone to continue his beloved research.

Then in the ancient forests of Africa, Marc met his wife, a charming Congolese girl. “She was just a farming girl, not an important person. But she was beautiful. She liked me and I liked her. Love is very simple. I don’t mind if my wife is a Congolese or not. I don’t see the difference of races.” However, in their daily lives, conflicts are inevitable. As he and his wife belong to two different cultures, they often had totally different opinions on even very small things. “There is no way to solve it, because the African way of life is different from the European way of life. When we have different ideas, we have to make compromises, both of us.”

Marc and his wife had only one child, a son who is now 24. He lives in the Democratic Republic of Congo and married a Congolese girl. Marc already has three grand children, but due to his recent hectic schedule, he only sees them twice a year.

To continue his dream

While setting up the exhibition in China, Marc found something that he had never thought about when he was in the Congo. That is, African culture and Chinese culture have great similarities. “That day, when my friend Henry Lu and I were sitting in the cafe, we suddenly found a motif which can be seen almost everywhere in the Congo, but that is a typical Chinese motif. What’s more, we also found in the Congo some ritual objects looking like dragons, which we assume the Conglese people learned from the ancient Chinese.” So he has decided to go back to the Congo together with his partner and friend, Lu, whom he met 5 years ago and is also a lover of African art. They will try to find traces of the Ming Dynasty in the Congo. Marc seems quite confident and he said he believed they could discover evidence of a relationship between the two great ancient cultures.

“I hope ordinary Chinese people will go to the museum, see the exhibition, and respect African cultures, for there are many similarities between Chinese Culture and African Culture. And we also hope Chinese scholars will start to study African cultures.” He said they would like to serve as a bridge between the Congo and China, helping them to communicate and to find the common spirit of the two nations. After the exhibition has finished its world tour, Marc and his friends will set off again, to pursue their beautiful dream.

By Peng Juan

The National Museum of China this summer is hosting an exhibition of 173 precious ancient Roman treasures from Italy, unveiling this ancient civilization that has had such a profound influence on the world's art and culture.

Fruit of three year's work

The relics are drawn from six prestigious Italian museums that boast of eminent treasures of the Roman civilization, including the Museum of Roman Civilization and the National Archaeology Museum of Naples.

They are classified into eight themes, such as Legend and History, Public Life, Business and Trade, Cooking and Feasts, and Religion and Funeral Rites, emphasizing the origins and development of the ancient Roman civilization from different aspects.

Among these significant relics are frescoes, sculptures, objects of daily use, jewelry, decorative objects, representing different aspects of daily routines and lifestyles. Most of the articles on display are rarities, and include among the highlights a bronze sculpture of Apollo, which is considered to be unique in Italy, and a marble Venus together with Eros.

The title "Exhibition of Ancient Roman Civilization" was chosen, according to Professor Zhu Fenghan, executive director of the National Museum, "because describing it simply as 'Ancient Roman Art', would not reflect sufficiently the aspect of social life and contribution to human history along with the rich and colorful artistic achievements."

Huang Chen of the National Museum told *Beijing Today* that the museum staff and their counterparts in Italy spent three years preparing the exhibition, and that it is the first time for the museum on its own to introduce such a large foreign cultural exhibition at a national level.

A trove of rare treasures

The exhibition is divided into two sections. The first relates to the evolution of ancient Rome from monarchy to republic and then to the dawning of the Roman Empire. Among these exhibits, a stone engraving of Romulus and Remus being suckled by a she-wolf is a striking reference to the legend of the founding of Rome; a terracotta statuette of an elephant bearing a tower, a marble bust of Pyrrhus, and a marble statue titled the Kneeling Persian provide a vivid illustration of representative events during the expansion of the Republic, while the marble busts of Augustus, Claudius I and Antoninus Pius publicly declare the emperors' power and pay tribute to the Empire's achievement.

The second part, constituting over 80 percent of the exhibits, focuses on economy, culture and social life from the late republic to the early stages of the Empire, (1 BC to 2 AD). Among these exhibits, fresco paintings of forum life, a bronze gladiator's helmet and bronze bath service utensils reveal the important influence that these public institutions and activities had on the society at that time; the vivid fresco painting of banquet scenes, together with kitchen furniture and lamps, tableware, and cosmetic related items provide a lively scene of the everyday life of Roman aristocrats and their pursuit of comfort and luxury; the fine bronze statuettes of domestic gods, Fortuna, Jupiter and Minerva, reflect the easy religious policy and the polytheistic beliefs of ancient Rome; while the marble and glass funerary urns reflect the ceremonious funerary customs of that time.



Black figure amphora showing Aeneas fleeing from Troy, terracotta, circa 510 BC. Possibly excavated in Vulci



Bowl with centaurs and cupids, silver, 1st century AD. Excavated from the House of the Silverware, Pompeii



Wall painting, Venus, Mid-1st century AD. Excavated in Herculaneum

Ancient Rome on Display



Statuette of Fortune, bronze and silver, 1st century AD. Excavated in Pompeii

Photos by Bao Wei

A number of the exhibits were unearthed from the cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum, which were buried beneath volcanic ash from Mount Vesuvius.

Maintaining the link between two ancient empires

Rome has always represented not just a famous city, but a key period of history, a prime civilization, a classic tradition, and moreover a model. Thoughts of Italy's ancient civilizations invariably center on the Romans and the glory of their art, history, military dominance and legacy.

The items on display reflect the formation and development of Roman civilization. As Zhu Fenghan explains, "These fine objects would draw us more closely to ancient Rome, and make us feel the historical miracle created by human being's talent and wisdom. The civilization represented by these objects in the exhibition is poles apart from the visage and style of the Chinese civilization with which we're familiar. It illuminates the fact that human beings have all along developed with the co-existence of multiple cultures. Rich and colorful, compatibility and co-existence, is the permanent existing model for human society."

The ancient Roman Empire actually came into brief contact with the Chinese people. History records that in the year 97 AD, the administrative officer of the Western Region in the Eastern Han Dynasty (25-220 AD) General Banchao, "sent Ganying as Embassy to Daqin, and he arrived in Tiaozhi." Daqin was the Chinese name for the Roman Empire, and Tiaozhi was a city on the coast of Persia, where the Tigris and the Euphrates flow into the sea.

Although Ganying did not go to Rome, indirect trade was maintained between the two empires. Chinese silk, in particular was considered a fashionable and luxurious item by the aristocrats of Rome, and Roman objects have been unearthed from a number of tombs of the Han Dynasty. It was not until 166 AD that an emissary from the Roman emperor An-dun (Marcus Aurelius Antoninus) arrived on the Chinese frontier bearing gifts for Emperor Hengdi of the Han Dynasty.

"We're more than happy to see in the 21st century these ancient Roman objects arriving in China, forging another link between our two countries, each with a long history and civilization," Zhu said.

Pan Zhenzhou, director of the National Museum, described the exhibition as an important event in the history of cultural exchange between China and Italy, and a continuation in the 21st century of the economic and cultural exchange between the two ancient empires.

First of a series

The Ancient Roman Civilization Exhibition will run until November 3, after which the Roman rarities will travel to the Provincial Museum of Henan Province and the Historical Museum of Shaanxi Province.

The exhibition is the first of a World Civilization series planned by the National Museum of China. More cultural exchanges between China and western countries are on the way.

Meanwhile a total of 101 cultural relics from China arrived in Athens in late May for display during the 2004 Olympic Games in August. Most of these have never before been on public display and 20 are under the highest level of state protection. In return, a group of state treasures from Greece will come to Beijing in 2008 when the Olympics are held in the Chinese capital.

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What's on DVD

By Jiang Haoshu



Their First Films

The Masters. Was the seed of genius already embedded in, say, their very first films? This collection offers a rare chance to view the maiden works of Maurice Pialat, Alain Resnais, Jean-luc Godard, Jacques Rivette, Francois Truffaut, Patrice Leconte, Jacques Doniol Valcroze and Jean-Pierre Melville. DVD 5, French with Korean and English subtitles.



Siberiade

An epic film by Russian director Andrei Mikhalkov-Konchalovsky, it pictures a Siberian village and its two families from early 20th century to the 1960s. Winner of the Special Jury Award at the 1979 Cannes IFF and Special Award at the 1982 Houston IFF. DVD 5, in Russian, English and French, and subtitles in all UN working languages (!).



Against the Ropes

Imagine Meg Ryan in the role of Jackie Kallen, a boxing manager surrounded by muscular boxers and street punks... when she's fighting not for glory but for respect? An inspirational film starring also Omar Epps. DVD 5, English and French with English subtitles, including two featurettes: A Ringside Seat and Queen of the Ring.



Acrobatic Heroes Swoop on Beijing

By Yu Shanshan

With *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* an Oscar winning hit, *Hero* breaking box office records and *House of Flying Daggers* receiving a pre-release thumbs up at the Cannes Film Festival, *wu xia*, or martial arts acrobatics, has become a bankable field in terms of artistic production.

This week, a new stage show called *Heroes* opens in Beijing, before embarking on a tour of Europe in August.

Heroes is a co-production by the Wuhan Acrobatic Troupe and China Performing

Arts Agency, combining acrobatics, kung fu, folk dance and folk music. Unlike the usual acrobatic shows, this 4 million yuan production, utilizing advanced lighting and sound equipment, revolves around stories and legends about heroes of ancient China, adding depth and drama to the plot.

The show entwines three lines of Chinese classic stories; *Hongfo Yeben* (*Hong Fo Flees at Night*) is about a young woman named Hong Fo and her lover Li Jing who run away together and later help to establish the Tang Dy-

nasty; *Ba Wang Bie Ji*, familiar to many as the 1993 film *Farewell My Concubine*, and *Huamulan*, adapted by Disney for the 1998 movie *Mulan*.

The director of the show is Li Xining, known as "the Zhang Yimou of acrobatics." A jury member for international acrobatic and circus competitions for many years, her productions include *Shaolin Warriors*, *Tai chi* and *Kungfu Show* which have all toured abroad to critical acclaim.

Where: Tianqiao Theatre
When: 7:30 pm, July, 22 - 25
Tickets: 40, 80, 150, 200, 280 yuan
Tel: 8315 6170

Rock Review

Flowers Bloom Again

By Wang Yao

The Flowers, the adolescent pop-punk band that took the country by storm in 1999, released their new album on June 24.

I Am Your Romeo is the band's second album since their 1999 debut *Flowers*, and first since signing with EMI early this year. This year, the members of the band are all 20 years old.

After two year's lying low, The Flowers have welcomed a new member, Shi Xingyu, who joins singer Zhang Wei, bass player Guo Yang and drummer Wang Wenbo. Shi plays guitar, leaving Zhang Wei to concentrate on singing and song writing.

The new-look Flowers have told local media that they are no longer interested in punk, their aim is simply to win more fans. This attitude sets a new tone for *I Am Your Romeo* - teen pop, and engineer Ou Dingyu, who has been a regular partner with Hong Kong singer Jackey Chung, does a good job of highlighting the band's vocal talents.

Though the main hit, *I am Your Romeo* (*Wo Shi Ni De Luo mi Ou*), is the Chinese version of *Hey, Juliet!*, a popular ad jingle for Olympus cameras, and hip-hop *Flower Show* swipes the theme from *Swan Lake*, which has also been used by Taiwan group S.H.E,



Yao Ming to appear in The Simpsons

LOSANGELES - Sports stars Yao Ming, LeBron James and Michelle Kwan



Yao Ming

will lend their voices to the hit animated television show *The Simpsons* in an episode poking fun at America's obsession with broadcast indecency.

The two National Basketball Association (NBA) stars and the figure skating champion will join television's most dysfunctional family for an episode to be broadcast after American football's Super Bowl championship next February, the show's producers, Fox television, said Friday.

In the animated show, the

WORLDWIDE

Stewart Sentenced to Five Months Prison

NEW YORK - Choking back tears and pleading for leniency, Martha Stewart was sentenced to five months in prison Friday for lying about a stock sale. But the woman who saw her gracious homemaking empire crippled over a single transaction smiled boldly into the cameras outside to denounce her treatment, pitch her company and vow: "I'll be back."



Martha Stewart

Stewart, who was also ordered to spend five months confined to her home and fined \$30,000, was allowed to remain free pending appeal. The sentence was the minimum possible under federal guidelines.

While she did not admit guilt in court - a move that could have jeopardized her appeal - Stewart took pains to tell Judge Miriam Goldman Cedarbaum she was sorry that others had been hurt by the scandal.

The prison sentence punctuated a chain of events that began on December 27, 2001, when Stewart, in a brief phone call from a Texas tarmac on her way to a Mexican vacation, sold 3,928 shares of ImClone Systems, a biotechnology company run by her longtime friend Sam Waksal.

ImClone announced negative news the next day that sent the stock plunging. Stewart saved \$51,000. Stewart always maintained she sold because of a preset plan to unload the stock when it fell to \$60.

(AP)

Simpsons' sloppy patriarch, Homer Simpson, inadvertently performs a wild crowd-pleasing dance at a local carnival that gets him hired by several sports stars to choreograph their victory dances.

(AFP)

Bjork's Got the Beat on New Album

NEW YORK - Bjork's upcoming album, *Medulla*, finds the artist singing over rhythms fashioned by such beatboxers as former Roots member Rahzel, Shlomo and Dokaka.



Bjork

The 14-track set is due August 31 via Elektra. It was produced by Bjork, with assistance on four tracks by longtime collaborator Mark Bell.

A limited edition of *Medulla* will sport expanded artwork and a 16-panel poster. According to her spokesperson, Bjork is not expected to embark on a full tour in support of its release. It was unclear if select dates are a possibility.

Medulla is the follow-up to 2001's *Vespertine*, which debuted at No. 19 on The Billboard 200 and has sold 368,000 copies in the US, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

(Reuters)

'Indiana Jones 4' Stalled Over Script Concerns

The eagerly awaiting new *Indiana Jones* movie won't be released for another two years, because producer George Lucas isn't happy with the script.



Harrison Ford

Indiana Jones 4 has been in the works for a number of years but looked likely to hit screens next year after Lucas recruited star Harrison Ford and original director Steven Spielberg for the project, and hired Frank Darabont to write a screenplay.

But Lucas has sent the *Shawshank Redemption* writer back to the drawing board. A studio source reveals, "*Indiana Jones 4* was meant to start shooting this summer but won't now be coming out until 2006. Even though Harrison and director Steven Spielberg were happy with the screenplay, Lucas still doesn't like the final act and wants a faster pace and more action."

(IMDB)

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加裕华装饰

By Zhao Hongyi

What kinds of professionals are most in demand in China today? Managers? IT experts? Accountants? The surprising answer is none of the above – it is stenographers.

State of Chinese stenography

Skilled computer stenographers are in high demand in China, as increasing numbers of companies, organizations and institutions need shorthand typists to assist them in keeping records and files.

A survey done by the Beijing Stenograph Association earlier this year calculated the average monthly salary of a stenographer was a mid-range 4,000 yuan. Top-end stenographers can get over 10,000 yuan, earning them the label of “gold collar workers” in this country.

Traditionally, Chinese shorthand was far more difficult than its English equivalent. But Tang Yawei, an over-90-year-old professor who devoted his whole life to developing the art, changed all that. Tang created the principals for modern Chinese stenography in the early 1930s and decades later went one step further and invented the labor-saving Chinese stenography machine in the mid-1990s.

Today, more than 100 professional schools across the country offer training courses in Chinese stenography, but skilled specialists remain few and far between.

Foreign language specialists even rarer

There are even fewer stenographers in China able to work in one or more foreign languages.

Beijing Today contacted sev-

Shorthand Skills Promise Long Career Returns

eral stenography service companies and schools, all of which answered queries on the availability of foreign-language specialists the same way: “We have none!”

“Demand for English stenographers is huge,” said Zhou Minghua, president of the Shanghai-based Shihua Stenograph School.

“I receive three to five inquiries a day for English stenograph services,” Zhou told *Beijing Today*. “A multinational company once offered 20,000 yuan for an English stenographer for just one week.”

Demand for stenographers able to work in Japanese or Korean is similarly huge, said Li Ying, manager of Beijing Chaoyue Stenography Co.

Where did all the stenographers go?

“You have to immediately understand all the words spoken, including those unclear even to native English speakers,” Yue Xiaona, general manager of Beijing Lanmo Stenograph Co said.

“Moreover, local English-skilled Chinese prefer to work in office positions, for example as simultaneous interpreters,



Supply is far below demand for skilled stenographers.

Photo by BQB

because such jobs are considered white-collar, while being a stenographer is regarded as skilled work.”

Top interpreters also earn far higher pay than stenographers.

Some Chinese stenographers chafe under the stigmas of being less well educated or laid-off workers who went through professional schools.

“Though they have the skills, it is not easy for them to become proficient in a foreign lan-

guage,” Yue said.

Learn from laowai?

Introducing foreign professionals, at least for instructing purposes, may seem an easy way to solve the problem but is not immediately feasible.

“High prices and language barriers prevent us from inviting foreign professionals to teach here,” said Li Ying. “Most Chinese stenography schools are only in the very beginning phases of business expansion.”

Beijing Today has lauched the new column below to provide readers with insight into different companies' styles and philosophies of personnel management.

Every week, this column will present first-hand information on personnel recruitment, training and career development at major companies.

Corporate HR

Siemens: A Great Place to Work

By Zhang Nan

Tuesday this week, Ma Qing, manager of the personnel department of Siemens China talked with *Beijing Today* about her company's human resources management culture.

BT: What is your recruiting plan for this year?

Ma: Siemens' public announcement of its 12-point program means the company is going to work harder in developing the Chinese market. We are placing recruiting advertisements on our website and other networks and newspapers.

BT: How do you conduct recruiting interviews?

Ma: Usually, interviews are chaired by two persons from Siemens, the corporate personnel consultant and the line manager – in most cases, the candidate's future supervisor.

The two interviewers focus on different questions. The consultant pays more attention to the candidate's comprehensive capability and potential, while the manager focuses more on his or her professional knowledge and working experience.

BT: What are the standards for hiring or firing people?

Ma: We have no fixed standards for hiring at Siemens. We make serious and comprehensive considerations before recruiting a person. A candidate's performance in interviews certainly is important. At the same time, not only knowledge and experience are important – we also look for customer orientation, team spirit and learning ability.

Firing is considered a serious matter at Siemens. Generally speaking, we don't do it often or easily. Usually we will communicate with an employee first to point out his or her mistakes and shortcomings and give him or her a chance to improve.

BT: What kind of training do you provide staff?

Ma: Every Siemens employee can receive lots of high quality professional training.

Besides, we believe that daily work is an important forum for training.

BT: Working in an office can have adverse health effects. What does Siemens do to avoid this?

Ma: The company gives every employee a membership card to a local exercise club and we conduct regular health examinations of staff every year.

Training Trends

PMP Certification

PMP is the short name for the Project Management

Professional diploma, a certificate created by the US-based Project Management Institute with the purpose of serving as a standard in the global project management field.

Today, over 75,000 project management professionals are active in 120 countries. Demand for PMP credentialed professionals is on the rise around the world, particularly among multinational corporations.

Project management professionals get starting salaries of around \$45,000 a year in the US, while senior managers earn as much as \$300,000 per year. Salaries may be lower in China, but the PMP is still highly regarded, sometimes even called the “third golden key” after the MBA and MPA.

China's State Administration of Foreign Expert Affairs has authorized several agencies to provide PMP training and examinations.

Rising demand for PMP managers is partly fueled by the approaching 2008 Olympics. The Beijing Organizing Committee for the 29th Olympic Games (BOCOG) announced on June 17 that they would recruit dozens of PMP professionals in coming years. (By Ruan Ying)

Job Hunting:

Ralph Appelbaum Associates, an award-winning New York design firm specialized in planning and design for large-scale museum exhibitions, is seeking a full-time exhibition designer.

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Britain Says 'Be Gone!' to Bogus Schools

On Monday afternoon this week, Jazreel Goh, education promotion manager of the British Council Beijing Office, chatted with our readers in the "Study Abroad Salon" on the hot topic of bogus schools in the UK.

Two weeks ago, the UK government identified more than 100 schools operating in the country as bogus, according to British media.

Monday's discussion focused on these schools, their backgrounds, and their impact on Chinese students.

To join in our weekly chats on studying abroad or access the archive of past chat transcripts, please visit our website at <http://bjtoday.ynet.com>.

What makes a school bogus?

What are the features of bogus schools?

—colapepsi

Bogus schools are schools which don't exist in the UK. They are just offices established to exploit the visa system for the sole purpose of making fast money to allow illegal migration into the UK. Usually, they don't have teaching facilities and issue offers to those who want to migrate to the UK illegally.

You said China is not the most seriously impacted place. Which countries have been most seriously affected?

—hostayi

We have no information on which countries are the most affected. The Home Office of the UK government keeps the information confidential to protect the interests of students studying in the UK.

One thing is for sure – according to the visa section of the UK Embassy in Beijing, no Chinese student has been involved in the schools uncovered this time.

Policies against bogus schools:

What are the policies of the UK government to deal with bogus schools?

—bogus

First, investigations have confirmed that the UK government makes international education a priority and is proactive in ensuring that international students are well protected and enrolled only in bona fide institutions.

The Home Office will make proactive and continuous efforts to ensure all students coming into the



Jazreel Goh

Photo courtesy by British Council Beijing

UK will enjoy education of world-class quality and recognition.

What steps has your government taken to prevent the emergence of the schools?

—dalahorse_365@hotmail.com

The UK government is continuing its investigations of the "bogus schools" uncovered. It will be a continuous legal process.

Some people believe you are taking the actions only as a gesture to appease angry foreigners and no legal punishments will be dealt out.

—monkeyking

schools and recognized institutions, plus 750,000 course details at bona fide institutions.

The British Council, working in China as the cultural and education section of the British Embassy, works closely with the Ministry of Education of China. A list of recognized and accredited institutions is also available at www.cscse.edu.cn.

Both the British and Chinese governments have made great efforts to ensure students are protected and have good studying experiences in the UK. This is in both parties' interest.

Can you tell us the names of the bogus schools?

—history

We don't have a full list of the bogus schools.

There are many joint master degree programs run in China by Chinese and British schools. Are these programs qualified and recognized?

—rosytulip

Please check with the local education bureau. If a program is registered with its local education bureau and the Ministry of Education, the degree is recognized both by the UK and China.

Is it possible to obtain quality evaluations of all British schools?

—dalahorse_365@hotmail.com

Yes. We have two evaluations: subject reviews and the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE). They are parts of the UK's comprehensive quality assurance system.

Subject reviews assess the quality of teaching and learning in specific subjects, particularly the learning experience and achievement of students. The results are useful for those considering a degree or postgraduate courses.

The results are available on www.qaa.ac.uk, or in the book *Guide to UK Education* which is available in many Xinhua Bookstores throughout China.

The RAE is useful for students considering postgraduate research programs. The results are available on www.hero.ac.uk/rae, or in *Guide to UK Education*.

There are also the ARELS and BASELT evaluation schemes for the accreditation of language schools. These evaluations are conducted by the British Council. Details can be found at: www.educationuk.org.cn/english.

(Edited by Zhang Nan)

Ask Ayi:

Q: I am studying mechanical engineering. Can you recommend some postgraduate courses, taught in English, in automation engineering in Germany?

A: Subjects like automation engineering tend to be taught in German in Germany, so if you want to study there, you will need to learn the language first.

Universities in Germany require applicants to receive 800 hours of language training and pass the interDAF or DSH language proficiency test before starting courses. Recommended universities for this subject include Technische Universität Berlin, Bonn University and Dusseldorf University.

Q: I am studying English in a university and interested in continuing on for a master's in interpretation and translation in an English speaking country. Can you give me some advice?

A: Many schools in Britain offer interpretation and translation courses, but they require applicants to get seven points in the IELTS test.

The University of Bath is famous for its department of European studies and modern languages. Two MA programs are available, one in translation and professional language skills, the other in interpreting and translating.

The University of Newcastle is another option. That university has teaching and research programs in the field of translation and interpretation.

Q: I am an undergraduate studying econometrics in the UK and expect to pursue a master's degree in the US. Can you please recommend some universities that might provide scholarships?

A: If you are applying to US universities from the UK, it would be best to first talk with agencies there.

To apply from China, you will need to provide results from the TOEFL and GRE tests as well as your four-year undergraduate academic records.

Economics-related majors are very popular and scholarships are very competitive. To get information about universities strong in this field, check out *U.S. News and World Report's* survey "Best Graduate Schools 2005" available at www.usnews.com.

(Edited by Xie Lixue)

Celebrating American Diversity

By Xie Lixue

For Chinese students abroad, one of the best ways to contact a country's culture is to take part in different holidays. On Monday, the US Embassy in Beijing invited young Americans of different backgrounds to exchange their experiences, demonstrating the country's cultural diversity.

African-American Camille Purvis said her favorite holiday was Thanksgiving. "My family members come back together and eat turkey and pumpkin pies," Purvis said.

Mashwana Vernon spoke about the festival of Kwanzaa, a winter celebration enjoyed by African-Americans and millions in the world African community.

Arizona native Josh Cartin's family is Jewish. "The most important celebration in my family is Passover."

Ory Abramowicz was born in Israel went to the US at age seven. He said, "I love Halloween and Hanukkah in the US because I can get free candy."

"My favorite holiday is Christmas," said Chinese-American Michael Lin. Most years, Lin attends a "champagne and toy" Christmas party, a charity event in which participants donate toys for needy kids.

"I'm half Chinese, half German," noted Sommer Austin. "My favorite holiday is Moon Festival, when we eat hotpot and snack on watermelon seeds."

Notice

Next Monday, July 29, Mrs. Frauke Dittmann, marketing director of the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) Beijing, will be our guest and talk about using English to study in German.

Please log into the "Study Abroad Salon" at <http://bjtoday.ynet.com> from 2 pm to 3pm to correspond directly with Mrs. Dittmann.

You can also forward questions to the host, Ayi, at: ayi@ynet.com

通知

下周一(7月26日)下午2:00-3:00, 今日北京“留学聊天室”将邀请德意志学术交流中心高校市场推广专员狄美丽女士(Mrs. Frauke Dittmann)与大家谈在德国用英语教授的课程和专业。

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欢迎届时锁定今日北京“留学聊天室”:

<http://bjtoday.ynet.com>。你也可以把问题发给主持人阿义:

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By Joel Kirkhart

For many chefs, grilling is the ultimate way to cook. Maybe it's primal – the smell of charring flesh conjures primordial memories of roasting freshly-killed mammoth over flames. Maybe it's that grilling provides a great excuse to head outdoors and makes it pleasurable to do so even when weather is scorching or murky. Or maybe it's simply because meat and vegetables off the grill taste so darn good.

It may hark back to simpler times, but grilling in the 21st century consists of far more than simply throwing a piece of meat over a fire. It has been elevated to an artful science replete with a whole line of equipment no serious griller should go without.

Grills themselves come in many kinds, from little hibachis to massive, professional gas units that cost as much as small cars and can feed 20 people at a time. Of paramount importance in choosing a grill is the issue of size. A typical Beijing apartment balcony will not accommodate much more than a little camp-style grill (available at many outdoor shops and department stores) while the same sized grill would quickly seem inadequate if stuck in a larger yard or patio.

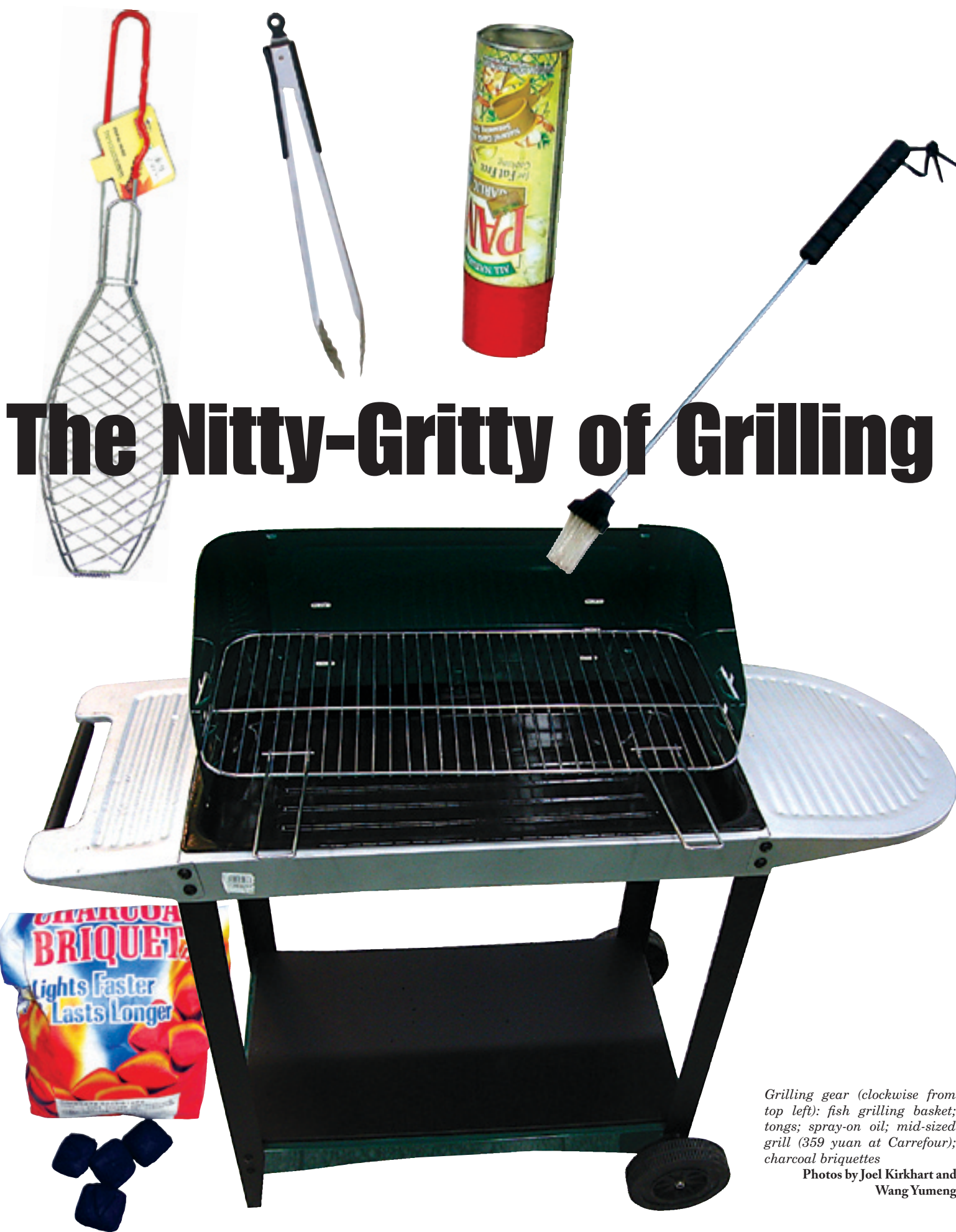
To get something more substantial, think warehouse shopping, a la Carrefour. The Carrefour branch near the International Exhibition Center stocks a commendable range of grills sized to fit different needs.

The basic, squarish model (69 yuan) offers all that is needed to cook up kebabs or burgers, with a decent-sized steel grill that can be height adjusted for some temperature control. At the higher end is arguably a home griller's best choice, a rectangular model that offers plenty of space and plusses like wheels and two side work tables (359 yuan). Big entertainers, bars or anyone who has ever wanted to cook a whole sheep should steer over to the massive king of Carrefour's grills, a 748-yuan monster meant for accommodating hungry parties.

Truth is, though, none of these grills are ideal, as they all lack covers and vents, both important features for the kind of heat control required for more sophisticated feats of slow barbecuing or smoking.

Once a grill purchase is completed, it's time to think accessories. Musts are thick oven mitts for protecting hands, solid, spring-loaded tongs for flipping and moving food, a sturdy spatula and a stiff metal brush for cleaning off char and other grill gunk. Useful extras include baskets for grilling fish and vegetables, skewers, brushes for applying glazes, a clamp-on light for after-dark cooking and a can of spray oil (think Pam spray) for easy lubrication.

Then it's on to the matter of fuel. Possibly the best choice is natural lump charcoal (available at Jenny Lou's stores and competitors) because it gives off clean smoke and plenty of heat. But such coal burns for only around 30 minutes, meaning troublesome reloading can be



necessary for extended cooking sessions. Charcoal briquettes tend to burn longer and can be easier to manage, but also are liable to produce ill-flavored, acrid smoke since they are basically patties of compressed wood dust bound with petroleum compounds and other chemicals.

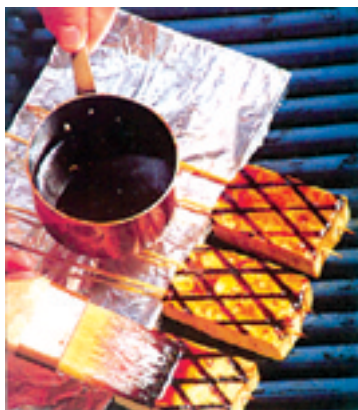
There is one more thing to take care of before starting to cook, and that is getting the grill surface ready. After adding hot coals, be sure to let the grill grate heat up and then give it a good, careful scrape with a grill brush. Then grease the grate by either taking it away from the heat and coating it with spray-on oil or wiping it with a paper towel dipped in cooking oil.

Cooking times of course vary on base ingredients and personal taste. One reliable (after plenty of practice) way to tell if meat, whether beef,

chicken, pork or lamb, is done is the poke test. Meat that feels supple, even squishy, under a prodding finger is quite rare – the firmer the meat gets, the more cooked it is. Particularly for larger cuts, remember to let meat rest several minutes after coming off the grill to let its natural juices redistribute, rendering it juicy and tender.

Last, and hardly least, is the issue of marinades and rubs. Saucy marinades can be used to infuse flavor into anything bound for the grill and even help tenderize tough cuts of meat. Rubs are dry concoctions of spices and salt that are generally applied shortly before cooking to add flavor to an ingredient's soon-to-be-crispy crust. Every good griller should have a couple marinades and rubs in his or her repertoire – the delicious

teriyaki marinade below is an excellent place to start.



Grilled teriyaki tofu is a tasty, healthy treat.

Recipe: Teriyaki marinade

This easy, versatile marinade goes great with nearly everything, and is so full of flavor it can even make bland tofu shine on the grill.

- 1/2 cup soy sauce
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1/2 cup orange juice
- 1/4 cup sesame oil
- 2 cloves garlic, peeled and crushed
- 2 slices peeled ginger, crushed
- 2 whole star anise

Combine all ingredients in a mixing bowl and whisk to mix thoroughly.

Most meat or tofu will pick up good flavor after one or two hours of soaking in this marinade. Cut vegetables may require less time and can get mushy if over-marinated.

For an extra splash of flavor, save used marinade and boil it down until it thickens. Then brush the thickened sauce over food as it grills for greater teriyaki taste.

Grilled Peaches

This easy side is a delicious foil for grilled seafood, pork or chicken.

- 4 ripe peaches
- 1/2 cup balsamic vinegar
- 1/4 cup brown sugar
- juice of 1 lemon
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

Peel peaches, then halve and remove pits. Sprinkle on all sides with about two teaspoons of lemon juice to keep from changing color, cover with plastic wrap and set aside.

In a small pan, combine vinegar, brown sugar, remaining lemon juice and black pepper. Boil until reduced by about half.

Place peaches cut-side down on a hot, lightly-oiled grill. Cover and cook for about two minutes, or until there are grill marks. Turn over and baste the cut sides with vinegar mixture. Cover the grill and cook for about three more minutes, or until softened.

Dining Out

Tempting "Buy One Get One Free" Dim Sum

New selections have been added to the authentic dim sum buffet served at the Kerry Center's Horizon Chinese Restaurant everyday during lunch hours. Guests can also dig in on a "buy one get one free" offer for the mouth-watering dim sum spread prepared by Hong Kong and Sichuan chefs.

Where: Kerry Centre Hotel, 1 Guanghua Lu, Chaoyang

Cost: 128 yuan (Monday to Friday), 118 yuan (weekends), plus 15 percent service charge

Open: 11:30 am - 2:30 pm

Tel: 6561 8833 ext. 41



Tuscan Mood at Da Giorgio

From July 26 to August 9, enjoy the art of simplicity with a Tuscan menu specially prepared by Italian Chef Rossi. Sample authentic Tuscan specialties with a matching list of regional wines at one of Beijing's most intimate Italian restaurants.

Where: Grand Hyatt Beijing, 1 East Chang'an Avenue

Cost: 138 yuan to 350 yuan

Tel: 8518 1234 ext. 3628



"Buy 3, Get 1 Free" Weekend Buffet

To celebrate Novotel's 50th anniversary, executive chef Jean Marc is presenting wonderful buffet lunches and dinners at the Coffee Shop. Mediterranean decorations will add a refreshing air to the fine dining, and a "buy three, get one free" promotion will be extended at every weekend lunch and dinner buffet through August 29.

Where: Novotel Xinqiao Beijing, 2 Dongjiao-minxiang, Dongcheng

Cost: 118 yuan for lunch; 138 yuan for dinner

Tel: 6513 3366 ext. 2001



Perfect Pasta at Henry J Bean's

Fill up on American-sized servings of Italian-style pasta. Load up for lunch, relax in the summer sun on our outdoor terrace and get more bang for your buck!

Where: China World Hotel, 1 Jianguomenwai Dajie

Cost: 68 yuan and up

Tel: 6505 2266 ext. 6569

By Sarah Bai

That China has a real thing for peaches – the symbols of long life and fertility turn up all over the place, from oddly-shaped cakes to the tops of Daoist masters' requisite staffs - is easy to explain, since the now worldwide fruit first grew in this country.

There's no better time to celebrate another of China's culinary contributions to the world than right now, as peaches are in peak season and fresh, sweet, voluptuous fruit are pouring in from countryside orchards.

Not only is the window for buying perfect peaches short, the fickle fruits also demand to be treated well, as they spoil quickly and are very easy to bruise or otherwise unwittingly abuse.

Peaches' fragile nature means that careful shopping is likely to reap the reward of better fruit. Start by choosing only unblemished fruit with a bit of give to their flesh and a distinct, peachy fragrance. Don't rely on the degree of a

Eat a Peach



fruit's red blush, as that has more to do with variety than ripeness. A better indicator of maturity is a pronounced cleft along the fruit. Avoid peaches with distinct green spots – they are not destined to achieve full ripeness.

Because peaches do not sweeten

significantly after they are picked, getting them when they are ripest is key to maximum enjoyment. Lengthen their short lives by keeping them in the refrigerator inside a paper bag (they will appreciate the humidity).

Despite all their sweet flavor, peaches are low in calories and rich in vitamin A, vitamin C, potassium, riboflavin and beta carotene. They also act as laxatives, help digestion and can add color to the complexion.

While peach skin is completely edible (as opposed to the poisonous pits), some people insist on peeling before eating – perhaps not a bad idea considering widespread pesticide use. A sharp knife will do the trip, but nearly as easy is to dunk a fruit in boiling water for 30 seconds to one minute and then rinse it in cold water. After such a bath, the skin should slide right off. This is an especially useful when cooking peaches, as the skin can get tough during baking, stewing or even grilling.

Personal Classifieds

Accommodation

1 bedroom apartment in Mega Hall for rent – \$750! 70 square meters, wooden floor, nice furniture & deco, full home appliance, 24-hour hot water, security, underground parking, satellite TV and broadband Internet access. Contact: Ms.Dong, 13161023781, email: dsqjmy@163.com

Apartment in Xuante Qu for rent! Excellent amenities, near Chaoyang Park, 10 min-

utes bike distance to Kerry Center, exquisitely decorated and furnished and brand new; Nirvana fitness spa inside community. 47.5 square meters. Price negotiable. Contact: Mr. Wu, wubin_42@yahoo.com or 13701334976

For Sale and Wanted

Gloria International is inviting all persons with business projects needing funds worth more than \$1 million to email their English written busi-

ness plans to drnyambiya@yahoo.com, or contact Darlington at 8260 1822 ext. 807

Language Exchange

Beijing girl, 25, well educated, good looking, is seeking English or Japanese partner (native speaker preferred). Email: flyingyoung2000@163.com

A Beijing girl, nice, tender and outgoing, wants to improve English and make friends with

native English speakers. Contact: 8451 7543, or email: zhnglingxuan1215@hotmail, zlx0339@sina.com.cn

A Beijinger is eager to look for a native English speaker. Female or university student is preferred. Contact: 13522995928 or email: tommy_zhang671@sohu.com

A Beijing resident, male, 25-year-old student seeks language exchange. Any native speaker either English or

French will do. Contact: davidsgcn@163.com

Personals

Seeking travel partner to US between Sept. 30 and Oct. 17. Me: Chinese lady in early 30s, speaks excellent English, well-educated, sweet, smart, sincere and fun. Traveled to US before for biz, and now want to have a vacation there. Plan to visit New York, New Jersey, Washington, Florida and California. Wish you: mature,

independent, happy and honest. Wish you and me a wonderful trip and a great start of friendship! Contact: beautifulife33@yahoo.com.cn

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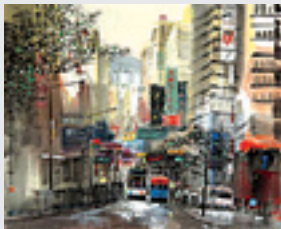
Exhibitions

Paintings of Liu Maoshan

Artist Liu Maoshan, a native of Suzhou, Jiangsu province, specializes in painting water villages of eastern China with a distinctive, colorful and poetic style.

In recent years, he has visited Japan, Britain, the US and Hong Kong for solo exhibitions and to take part in cultural and academic exchange. His works have won wide acclaim and hung in the collections of museums and galleries in China and overseas.

Where: Wan Fung Art Gallery, 136 Nanchizi Dajie, Dongcheng **When:** July 23-28 **Admission:** free **Tel:** 6523 3320



Chinese Prints

An exhibition of prints by acclaimed artists Gao Rongsheng, Wu Biduan, Wang Weixin and Guang Jun.

Where: Qin Gallery, Hua Wei Li 1-1 E, Chaoyang **When:** July 23-31 **Admission:** free **Tel:** 8779 0461

Color of Chinese ink

An exhibition of works by artists including Fang Xiang, Du Jie and Chen Feng. This show of innovative, inspiring ink and wash paintings will open viewers' eyes to whole new worlds of Chinese art.

Where: Creation Art Gallery, north end of Ritan Donglu, Chaoyang **When:** July 26 – August 8, 10 am – 7 pm (daily) **Admission:** free **Tel:** 8561 7570



Movies



To and Fro

Directed by Salvador Aguirre. Filiberto returns to his hometown after working three years in the US. In his struggle to gain recognition, he is overcome by ambition. Feeling himself a misfit and cornered by betrayal, he must find a way to reclaim his identity, which has been trampled by the violence of events...

Where: Mexican Embassy, 5 Sanlitun Dongjie, Chaoyang **When:** 7:30 pm, Wednesday **Admission:** free **Tel:** 6532 2244



Perduto Amor

Directed by Franco Battiato, starring Corrado Fortuna, Donatella Finocchiaro, Anna Maria Gherardi. In 1950s Sicily, Ettore is a young child who lives surrounded by women and seems to be always surprised of what happens around him – it's Sicily seen through the innocent eyes of Ettore. His eyes are not so innocent anymore when we find him some years later, ready to leave his isle, and finally he is in Milan, where he knows some of the most interesting people in town, both in literary and music circles.

In Italian with English subtitles.

Where: Italian Embassy, 2 Dong'erjie, Sanlitun **When:** 7 pm, Thursday **Admission:** free **Tel:** 6532 2187



The Missing Gun

Directed by Lu Chuan, starring Jiang Wen, Ning Jing, Wu Yujuan. A policeman named Ma Shan wakes up after a night of drinking at his sister's wedding to discover that his gun and three bullets are missing. During his search for the gun, everybody becomes a suspect: his wife, his son, his friends, his enemies, and, after one of the bullets is found inside a murder victim (who happens to be his former mistress), even Ma Shan himself.

There is so much that is wonderful about this first film from director Lu Chuan. The opening credits announce a somewhat zany, cascading tempo that always somehow remains under control. Mega-star leading man Jiang Wen ("Red Sorghum," "Keep Cool," "The Emperor's Shadow") plays a sort of "bull in a China shop" character who breaks or is cut by everything he touches.

He is the straight-man for a troupe of town folk, old army buddies and hapless peasants, each of whom could be as innocent as they seem, but then they each seem to have something behind them...

Where: Cherry Lane Movie Theater, 29 Liangmaqiao Lu, Chaoyang **When:** 8 pm, tonight and Saturday **Admission:** 50 yuan **Tel:** 13501251303

Performance

Searching for the Lost Elegant Demeanor

Directed by Gu Yi'an, this show about Chinese underwear culture is sure to thrill Beijing audiences.

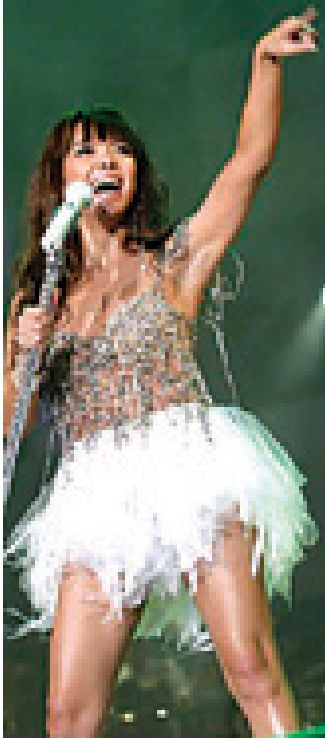
Where: Poly Theatre, Dongsi Shitiao **When:** 7:30 pm, July 30 **Admission:** 100-500 yuan **Tel:** 6506 5345



Music

A-Mei Returns

Pop star A-Mei takes the stage at Capital Gymnasium for a solo show that will feature fans' favorite energetic melodies and romantic ballads. **Where:** Capital Gymnasium (Shouti), 54 Baishiqiaolu, Xicheng **When:** 7:30 pm, July 31 **Admission:** 180-1,000 yuan **Tel:** 6833 5552



Activities

Bj Hikers

The "rolling stones" hike starts from a park located northwest of the Ming tombs. We will walk up a valley with rocky cliffs on both sides and a clear stream running through the middle. Eventually we will come to a shepherd's hut on top of the valley. From there we will walk up into a quarry at the top of the mountain and pass a ruined village. Hiking along a high trail where we get excellent views, we head up a windy ridge where we can see the "Henry Moore Rock". From the ridge we walk down to a small village where those people who want to take it easy can get picked up by the bus. This part of the walk is two hours 40 minutes.

Where: Changping county, north of Beijing **When:** Sunday, pick up 8 am at the Lido Hotel outside of Starbucks **Cost:** 150 yuan per adult, 100 yuan per child under 12 **Tel:** 13910025516

YPHH BJ Summer Party

Eight Over Eight is a brand new contemporary restaurant that offers Guangdong-style food and a great selection of quality imported wines. To celebrate summer and its opening, you are welcome to come along and taste the house specials and a glass of wine in this unique environment. Entrance is free and everyone receives a free glass of wine on entry. Eight Over Eight will also serve a complimentary food buffet.

Where: No. 1 Sanlitun Beijie, Chaoyang **When:** July 28 **Tel:** 8454 0054

Trip to a Ming Village

Chuandixia Village, nestled in the mountains in Mentougou District, is renowned for its well-preserved courtyard houses dating back to the Ming and Qing dynasties. There are 70 courtyards arranged in two levels of the village, separated by a wall that blends into the natural landscape.

Chuandixia Village is the only area in Beijing listed as a national village architecture reserve and draws lots of art and architecture students.

Where: meet at Chinese Culture Club (29 Anjialou, Liangmaqiao Lu, Chaoyang) to catch the bus **When:** depart Sunday, 8:30 am **Cost:** 160 yuan per person (members 130 yuan) including ticket and transportation. **Note:** Email or phone to reserve, deposits required for reservations **Tel:** 8851 4913 **E-Mail:** beijing@chinesecultureclub.org



Service

Save with Shangri-La's Rate Break

Shangri-la Hotels and Resorts is offering savings of up to 40 percent with its new "rate break" promotion available at all 42 Traders and Shangri-La hotels and resorts throughout the Asia Pacific and the Middle East. The promotion even includes doubled frequent flyer miles with participating airline partners.

Where: Shangri-La Hotel, 29 Zizhuyuanlu **When:** until August 31 (all hotels)

Tel: 8529 9913



TV and Radio Highlights

HBO

23 Friday

Analyze That 9:00 pm

24 Saturday

8 Mile 9 pm

25 Sunday

Cabin Pressure 6:30 pm

26 Monday

Big Fat Liar 10:45 pm

27 Tuesday

Simone 10:50 am

28 Wednesday

Flipper 9:00 pm

29 Thursday

Panic Room 9:00 pm

CCTV-9

Monday – Friday

Around China 6:30 am

Cultural Express 8:30 am

Nature and Science / Chinese Civilization 11:30 am

Cultural Express 2:30 pm

Nature and Science / Chinese Civilization 5:30 pm

Dialogue 7:30 pm

News Updates / Asia Today 8 pm

Sports Scene 11:15 pm

Saturday

Travelogue 9:30 am

Center Stage 11:30 am

Sunday

Sports Weekend 10 am

Documentary 10:30 am

This Week 12:30 am

China Radio International 91.5 FM

Monday – Friday

Easy FM Afternoon 2-7 pm

Fun in Beijing 5-5:30 pm

Joy FM 9:05-11 pm

Saturday

Music Memories 8:05-11 am

Euro Hit 40 12:05-1 pm

Music Sans Frontiers 6:05-8 pm

Joy FM 9:05-11 pm

Sunday

Music Memories 8:05-11 am

Jazz Beat 6:05-8 pm

Joy FM 9:05-11 pm

We are glad to receive your feedback. We will print employment, language exchange and accommodation info for individuals. Feel free to email us at bjtodayinfo@ynet.com or call 6590 2518
By Zhang Jianzhong

By Sheng Mingming

There are frequent buses from Kaili, Guizhou, to the county seat of Rongjiang, where more than 20 Dong houses line a 15 kilometer stretch of the riverbank, shadowed by ancient banyan trees. The sloping roofs of the wooden houses form beautiful geometric designs.

Chejiang, known as the “Thousand-House Dong Village,” is just one kilometer from Rongjiang, across the river. Like all Dong villages, it has a wooden gate at the village entrance where locals welcome and see off visitors and guests. Visitors are presented with a bowl of wine before passing through the gate. Those who receive wine from a singing young woman must return her greeting in song. Those who cannot sing, or who fail to respond, are obliged to drink more wine. It is only after drinking that visitors are qualified to become friends with the villagers.

The village gate, the houses, the wind-and-rain bridges and the drum towers of Dong villages are all built of wood, each consisting of dozens or even hundreds of logs, and no nails or rivets are used in their construction.

A typical Dong house is two or three storeys high; some have four storeys. Poultry and domestic animals are kept on the first floor; the central room on the second floor is a sitting room where the family members congregate and where the women do household chores and the girls weave. On one side is the kitchen and on the other, the bedroom of the older family members. On the third floor are bedrooms for the younger family members, which is also used to store grain. There is generally one family to a building, although nowadays, it is common for several buildings to be linked by covered walkways.

At the center of the village stands the drum tower – usually one in each village. The 27-storey drum tower at Chejiang is a must-see. Built in 2002, it is the highest by far in all the Dong villages, with green-tiled roofs, flying eaves with up-pointed ridges, colorfully carved dragons and phoenix, and wooden lattice windows.

Accommodation: There are many hotels and restaurants in Rongjiang County. If you are lucky, locals will offer you some of the Dong specialties in their homes.

Zengchong Drum Tower

Zengchong is a village of around 100 families in the mountains 82 kilometers northwest of Congjiang, one-and-a-half hour's drive from Rongjiang.

Zengchong Drum Tower is the largest and oldest drum tower in Guizhou. Originally built in 1672 during the Qing Dynasty, the pagoda-like structure is 25 meters high, with a twin gourd-shaped top and a ceramic crown. On the top floor is a three-meter-long leather drum.

Drum towers are a landmark of Dong villages, the eaves of the ground floor are four-cornered, while those of the upper levels are hexagonal or octagonal. The facade between the first and second tier is carved with dragon and phoenix patterns – symbols of village prosperity. The uppermost point of the tower holds a large drum made from a hollowed birch log with ox hide stretched over it.

This is the village center, where meetings are held, village matters are discussed, and mediation on disputes among villagers takes place. It is used to summon the villagers in case of attack by enemy tribes or fire, and is also where the villagers gather after the harvest and for recreational pursuits, typically playing music, story telling and singing. On festive occasions, it is where guests are welcomed and seen off, where competitions in singing and reed-pipe playing are staged, and where lion and dragon dances are performed.

Transportation: There are buses from Rongjiang and Congjiang counties to Tingdong, from where it is only 20 kilometers to Zengchong. Be prepared to walk, as the road is very bad and often impassable in wet weather.

Xiaohuang Dage

Xiaohuang, the “home of Dong songs, is a village in Congjiang County, two-hours' drive from the county seat.

There are over 20 singing groups, with over 1,000 members. There are more than ten types of songs, sung on different occasions. Songs for dating, spinning, sitting in a group, drinking and inviting people to drink. The Dong *dage* is the best known singing style. Sung in a polyphonic style sung by a group of villagers, *dage* is sung by three to tens and even hundreds of singers for different parts without musical accompaniment, and has been nominated for inclusion on the UNESCO list of oral and intangible cultural heritage.

The best time to visit Xiaohuang is during Spring Festival and Mid-Autumn Festival, when the Dong people's

Down among the Dong



Villagers at Xiaohuang sing dage in front of the drum tower.

Photos by Imaginechina

Pagoda-like drum towers, rows of *diaoqiao lou* and ingenious wind-and-rain bridges are some of the highlights of a visit to the Dong nationality villages of southeast Guizhou Province.

This week, *Beijing Today* sets out from the city of Kaili to hike through Rongjiang, Congjiang, and Liping counties, going deep into the heartland of ethnic Dong culture.



The oldest wind and rain bridge at Diping was built in 1883.



Dong villagers take shelter on a wind and rain bridge.

singing competitions are held.

Transportation: There is only one commuter bus from Congjiang to Xiaohuang. The 20 kilometer trip takes about two hour.

Zhaoxing Drum Tower Cluster

Nestled in a lush valley and surrounded by rice terraces, the village of Zhaoxing in Liping County is a great place to explore on foot. It is a little visited region with forest coverage of 45 percent, towering mountains, huge waterfalls, and countless clear, winding rivers. The Dong people in Zhaoxing are all surnamed Lu.

The village is divided into five parts according to family groups. Each has one wind-and-rain bridge and one drum tower – unlike most other Dong villages. The drum tower cluster is the largest and best preserved in China. Each individual drum tower represents one group of local people. It is said that the village head divided the inhabitants into five groups in order to make administration easier.

The highest drum tower is 25 meters high. Inside are carved figures of people, animals and flowers, as well as a 10-meter wooden “dragon bench.”

As well as the five towers, there are five wind-and-rain bridges in Zhaoxing. The bridges have earned the name “flower bridges” because of the exquisite sculptures that cover them. On rainy days, sitting in the bridge pavilions and chatting with friends is one of the most popular pastimes of the local people.

On both sides of the bridges, one can find the houses of local people, called *diaoqiao lou* (houses built along the river). The *diaoqiao lou* in Zhaoxing feature a public connecting passage on the ground floor. People living in the houses built the passage as a shelter from the frequent torrential rain. By way of these passages and the five bridges, it is possible to walk from one end of the village to the other without ever being exposed to the elements on a rainy day.

If hiking is not your thing, Zhaoxing is a great place to simply sit and watch the world go by. There are always people coming and going, farmers heading out to the fields with their water buffalo in tow, people riding their horse-driven carts along the streets, grandmothers playing with their grandchildren on the wind-and-rain bridges, and old men playing dominoes or Chinese chess in the shade of the drum towers.

You may come across many local women peddling baskets of delicately made and very reasonably priced silver decorations in the streets.

Transportation: There are buses from Guiyang and Kaili to Liping County, from where there are buses to Zhaoxing.

Diping Wind-and-Rain Bridge

There are over 400 *fengyu* (wind-and-rain) bridges in Liping, Rongjiang and Congjiang counties. Diping, a village in Liping County has the most outstanding examples, which display a skillful combination of the railing-style structures popular in Dong villages and Han Chinese style bridge construction.

Diping is located in the southeastern of Guizhou, close to the border of Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region. The oldest wind-and-rain bridge there was built in 1883. The 70-meter bridge, spanning the picturesque Nanpanjiang River looks like a long corridor with benches along both sides, where people can rest or seek shelter from the rain and wind or sun. There are three pavilion-style pagodas, under which stand three halls housing the local gods. On the top of the highest pagoda are four dragons that guard its inner treasures, signifying that the Dong village is well protected by its surrounding mountains.

The wind-and-rain bridges are also a place for youngsters to gather, especially during Spring and Mid-autumn festivals, and the Lusheng Pipe Gathering.

Transportation: There are mini-buses from Liping and Zhaoxing directly to Diping.

Tips:

During summer it rains almost daily, so pack wet weather gear and make sure your backpack is water-proofed. During the monsoonal period, a pair of sandals will be useful, as leather or cloth shoes easily become moldy.

If you haven't made the switch to digital, take a supply of fast film since it is almost always overcast.

A sleeping bag will come in handy in some of the smaller villages that do not offer accommodation, such as Xiaohuang.

Getting there: There are daily flights from Beijing to Guiyang, capital of Guizhou Province (1,560 - 1,730 yuan). From Guiyang, it is three hours by bus or train to Kaili.